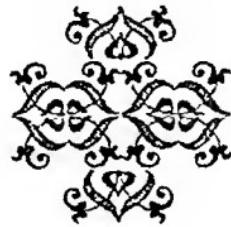


A BOOK
OF VERSE
from Langland
to Kipling
being
a Supplement to the
GOLDEN TREASURY
Compiled by
J. C. SMITH

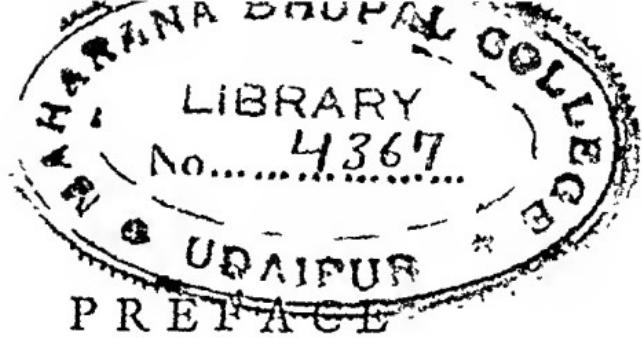


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YEARS ago, before the war, the Delegates of the Clarendon Press invited me to add to my *Book of Verse for Boys and Girls* a fourth part designed for older pupils. At the time I demurred, fearing comparison with the *Golden Treasury*. But now that the invitation has been renewed I have come to think that there may be room for a book which seeks not to rival but to supplement the *Golden Treasury*. The *Golden Treasury* is a collection of lyrics; and there are many non-lyrical poems in English that pupils would read as eagerly as the lyrics of the *Golden Treasury* if they were available in as handy a form. Therefore I have made this collection, and by this practical aim I would wish it to be judged. I have assumed that my readers possess the *Golden Treasury*, and possess it in the Oxford edition 'with additional poems'. I have kept off that ground altogether; and generally in the periods covered by the original *Golden Treasury* I have eschewed all lyrics, except two gems that Palgrave at first overlooked. In the later periods I have been less scrupulous, but always with a preference for non-lyrical poems if equally representative. I have also assumed that my readers will possess certain poems in separate editions, e.g. Chaucer's *Prologue*, sundry plays of Shakespeare, Milton's *Comus* and a book or two of *Paradise Lost*, with one of Scott's longer poems, and perhaps *The Rape of the Lock*. Let them add to these the poems in

Preface

this collection, with the English Association's *Songs of To-day* for contemporary lyric, and they will leave school not ill grounded in English poetry. And 'by nothing is England so great as by her poetry'.

The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes had some poetry of their own even before they quitted their homes in Low Germany. They had the Epic and the Lay, specimens of which survive in *Beowulf* and the *Fight at Finnsburgh*. Left in heathendom they might have evolved a poetry of native myth and legend, like the Norse. But Christian missionaries from Rome soon brought them under the sway of an older civilization and a loftier religion; and thenceforth the Anglo-Saxon poets, though they could still sing at times of battle and adventure, devoted themselves in the main to humble paraphrase of the Bible story. All this, however, was in a tongue and idiom as strange to us as German, so that poetry written before the Conquest is called Anglo-Saxon rather than English.

Out of the welter that followed the Conquest a new nation emerged, with new habits of thought and speech, blended of Anglo-Saxon and Norman-French—in a word, the English nation and the English language. The first great poet of this new nation was Geoffrey Chaucer.

Though Chaucer is in this sense the father of English poetry, in the history of European poetry he comes near the end of an epoch. In the latter half of the fourteenth century the Middle Age—the age of Faith, Romance, and Chivalry—was drawing towards its close. In its course it had accumulated a wealth of 'storial matter' drawn from the Bible and the classics, from the lives of

the saints, and the heroic legends and folk-lore of many lands ; and many poets had worked over this matter—French, Provençal, Italian. Before Chaucer applied himself to give part of this common store an English dress and setting in the *Canterbury Tales*, he had served an industrious apprenticeship to French romance, had sat at the feet of Boccaccio and Petrarch, and had learned from his continental masters the art of smooth syllabic verse rhymed in couplets or stanzas. Chaucer's world was still a small ring of West European states, pressed upon by Islam from the east and south, but united in themselves by a common creed and culture to a degree not since realized—the Catholic world of Western Christendom, whose heights and depths Dante had explored.

Chaucer was a courtier, content in the main to dwell on the bright surface of chivalry and rhyme its heroisms and humours to a courtly audience. But under the surface there was much misery among the commons—oppression in the State, corruption in the Church, even plague and famine at times. This aspect of English life found a voice in William Langland, the first of our prophets as Chaucer of our poets. Langland represents the Anglo-Saxon strain. Though his language is as Frenchified as Chaucer's, he had little of Chaucer's French culture, and his *Vision of Piers Plowman* is couched in the rough accentual alliterative metre of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

With Chaucer's death a blight fell on English poetry, due partly to civil strife, partly to the exhaustion of mediaeval themes, and partly to phonetic decay in the language, where the loss of endings and shifting of accents,

by divorcing the written from the spoken language, for a time imperilled the sense of metre. Popular poetry escaped this blight by clinging fast to the spoken language; indeed, the fifteenth century is the heyday of the ballad. And literary poetry might also have escaped had another great genius been born just then. But none of Chaucer's English successors was fit to carry on the tale he left half told. Let us turn, then, for a moment to Scotland.

Here poetry, it would seem, had begun to bloom in the glint of sunshine that followed Alexander III's repulse of the Northmen: at least the half-legendary figure of Thomas the Rhymer, the supposed author of the romance of *Sir Tristrem*, appears to belong to that age. But this promise faded away in the deadly struggle for national independence, and it was fitting that the first important Scots poem should be John Barbour's record of that struggle. Barbour was a contemporary of Chaucer's, and, though not a disciple, had been brought up in the same French school: his *Bruce* is in the short rhymed couplets of the *Romaunt of the Rose*. The *Bruce* is a noble piece of work, but it is a rhymed chronicle rather than a poem. This native strain was continued by Andrew Wyntoun and Blind Harry, the former being more of a chronicler, the latter more of a poet and not unversed in Chaucer.

It was under the direct influence of Chaucer, in fact, that Scots poetry in the fifteenth century burst into purples that outreddened the contemporary English roses. From his English captivity James I brought home a love for Chaucer, and with his *King's Quair* founded the school of Scottish Chaucerians, of which the other chief ornaments were Henryson, Dunbar, and Gavin Douglas.

It was an accomplished school while it lasted, wielding a great variety of elaborate metres, and an ornate—sometimes too ornate—diction. It reached its zenith at the court of James IV, and its catastrophe on the field of Flodden. Amid the religious controversies of the sixteenth century it still put forth late blooms; but it belonged essentially to the Middle Age: it failed to take new life from the new learning, and with the removal of the court to London in 1603 Scots poetry lost its gentle audience and sank to the level of folk-song.

Long before this the Renaissance had reached England, and had been speedily followed by the Reformation. By the date of Elizabeth's accession the nation had grown fairly stable in matters of polity, opinion, and language, and the times were once more propitious for poetry. Meanwhile Wyatt's translations from Petrarch and Surrey's from Virgil had added two new instruments to the English orchestra, viz. the sonnet and blank verse. It took a generation to prove them, during which Sackville, Sidney, Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare grew up; and then came such a burst of song as England had never heard before. The genius of the time poured itself most freely into the popular drama; but on that I cannot dwell here. Nor, after Mr. Palgrave, need I dwell on the lyric, except to remind my readers that this was also one of the great ages of English music, when every other man could touch a lute and song-making was a common accomplishment. Outside drama and lyric, the central figure in pure poetry is Edmund Spenser. Spenser was the second father of English poetry. He re-created its diction, he revived its music, and enlarged its compass,

founding the English ode by his adaptations of the Italian *cancione*, and inventing for his *Faerie Queene* the splendid stanza that bears his name. In that masterpiece he essayed a loftier task than any English poet had yet attempted—a poem, namely, which should embrace the whole of human conduct and life, as it was lived in those great times. Into the mediaeval form of a quest or adventure he poured the spirit of his own age. The horizons had widened since Chaucer's day. The navigators had discovered a new world : the scholars of the Renaissance had revealed a forgotten civilization : Spain had driven the Moors from her soil and the Turks from her waters ; but the Reformation had split Western Christendom. To Spenser, Islam was a remote and fading menace : the eternal war of good and evil was embodied for him in the struggle of Protestant England with Catholic Spain. But he laid the scenes of his warfare by the shores of old romance, and gilded them with beauties unknown to Chaucer, beauties drawn from the new Greek learning and the new Italian poetry of Ariosto and Tasso. All later English poets are Spenser's debtors.

Even before Elizabeth's death, the unity of national feeling which had acclaimed the *Faerie Queene* began to show rifts both in religion and in politics. In poetry, too, the introspective yet passionate genius of John Donne turned away from romantic conventions to explore the secrets of the inner life, and drew after it a large following of the witty and pious in his own generation and the next. But Donne, after all, was a deep backwater : Spenser was in the main stream.

Milton acknowledged to Dryden that Spenser was

his original. The debt is obvious in the metres and diction of his earlier poems ; and, though the blank verse of *Paradise Lost* owes nothing to Spenser, its scheme of salvation had been outlined in Spenser's *Hymn of Heavenly Love*. With a sterner temper than Spenser's, and an art far more austere, Milton essayed a still loftier task—a task commensurate with all time and all existence—nothing less than the justification of God's ways, as Puritanism comprehended them. For schism had invaded the Protestant faith itself when Milton, in the strength of his own genius and learning, set forth to do for his sect what Dante, with the metaphysical aid of all the schoolmen, had done for mediaeval Catholicism. In the end he produced, not indeed a system of theology, but a sublime fable which imposed itself on the Protestant mind for two centuries with an authority almost Scriptural. And he made the only long non-dramatic blank-verse poem in our language which, taken as a whole, can justly be called great. Only the planetary momentum of that mighty orb of song could sustain so vast a flight without the wings of rhyme.

Except in Milton, the ideal impulse which had upheld English poetry for a century died down at the Restoration. The wars of religion were over : men turned to business or pleasure ; and the poets, no longer ' presuming to scan ' a God who, as they thought, was withdrawn into His heaven, sought their subjects and their audience in polite society. They aimed at a style to match, neither learned nor popular—even the drama was no longer ' popular ' in the Elizabethan sense—but socially cultivated. Extravagance and enthusiasm went out of

fashion, correctness and common sense came in. The heroic couplet, long used for narrative, proved even more useful for eulogy, satire, and argument political or social. Dryden gave it an edge and Pope a point; and for two generations it fairly ousted all other measures except in tragedy, where blank verse, after a short conflict, held its own. This Augustan age, as it was called, perfected English prose, and imported into the more pedestrian forms of verse the peculiar excellences of prose: only it grew stilted when it tried to soar.

The next two generations saw the ideal impulse beginning to stir again, striving to break through the Augustan convention to a more natural, moving, and imaginative treatment of simpler or deeper things. Thomson's love for country life, Cowper's love for animals, Blake's love for children, the interest shown by Gray and Collins in non-classical myths and legends, whether Norse or Welsh or Gaelic—all these are stirrings of a spirit not yet quite conscious and articulate. We honour these poets as much for what they sought as for what they achieved. The times were still unpropitious for high poetry; and it is scarcely a mere coincidence that, of the four English poets whom I have named, three were more or less insane and the fourth was touched with melancholy, as if in that rationalistic age it was only through the cracks and chinks of reason that the English mind could escape into pure poetry. Burns's ample and genial achievement was due largely to his luck in being born a Scottish peasant; cradled, therefore, in the popular tradition of song which still lived in Scotland, and able at the same time to go behind the Augustan

convention of English poetry to an independent literary tradition and serve himself heir to the old Scottish 'makars'. Out of these two Scottish traditions—the popular and the literary—he framed a style admirable for all the homelier purposes of poetry: its loftier forms he did not attempt. In England, the oral tradition of popular verse was dead or dying; but the publication of Percy's *Reliques* in 1765 revealed some of the wealth of older English poetry, especially of popular poetry, and helped to free the tongues of a new generation of poets then about to be born. All things now pointed towards some great change.

The herald of the new era was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In opposition to the doctrines of Divine Right and Original Sin he taught that society was essentially a compact for the promotion of the general happiness, and that man, though corrupted by convention and custom, was originally good, perfectible, and in harmony with benevolent nature. Such teaching was a challenge to Europe to break up the old order and remould it nearer to the heart's desire. In the same spirit the Declaration of American Independence asserted for all men the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. On minds indoctrinated with these ideas the French Revolution broke like the dawn of a golden age, when Nature and Reason, dethroning custom, should speedily lead all mankind to happiness.

The corresponding movement in poetry has many aspects; but they all import a breaking with the old order, and a reaching out into 'unknown modes of being' for new sources of inspiration, new forms of truth or

beauty, new freedom, new happiness. ‘The Return to Nature’, ‘the Renaissance of Wonder’, ‘the Romantic Revival’—these names describe the aspects of the movement which appealed most to Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott respectively. To Wordsworth, its foremost apostle, it meant above all a new conception of God, as of One not withdrawn from the world He had made but dwelling creatively in nature and in the mind of man. Cast down from the hope that he had built on the Revolution, Wordsworth retired to the mountains among which the foundations of his mind had been laid, not despairing of man’s infinite destiny, but cherishing the vision which he once beheld, and seeking to root his faith deeper in the primal sympathies and sanctities of nature and kindred, and to find his happiness there. And so he brought poetry back to truth, finding his subjects in the common primary affections and duties, reforging the outworn diction of poetry in the fire of his own heart, and tempering it anew in the stream of common speech. Could he have done as much for English rhythms, our debt to him would have been still greater. Even as it is, he may well be called the third founder of English poetry, which still keeps the bent that he gave it. The finer but more fugitive genius of Coleridge, similarly disappointed, made itself anodynes of mystery and metaphysics, and still dreamed on. Scott was neither a revolutionary nor a visionary; but his keen sense of natural beauty, and his profound feeling for the past, revealed to his delighted countrymen the romantic glories of their native land and their own history.

The second triad of Romantic poets stood in a different

relation to the French Revolution. They had not known the hope of its dawn nor the despair of its eclipse. By the time they grew to manhood the Quadruple Alliance had resettled Europe in the interests of monarchy. But the reverberations of the Revolution still filled the air. Its love of freedom, its hatred of oppression and cant still burned in Byron's heart : Shelley's being was a passion of creative aspiration towards a world in which the air we breathe is love : Keats lived and died in the eager pursuit of the principle of beauty in all things. To these poets Greece now stood for something of what France, in the days of youth and hope, had meant to Wordsworth and Coleridge. She drew their eyes as the land where the human spirit had once achieved its noblest expression, and might, if free, do so again. In Elizabethan days Sidney and Spenser had dallied with Hellenism, and so had some of our seventeenth-century poets : Milton, Gray, and Coleridge knew Greek literature, as they knew most literatures ; but as a vivifying influence in English poetry Hellenism dates from the generation when Keats interpreted the art of Greece, and Shelley sang of her, and Byron died for her. About the same time another bygone civilization began to exert fresh charms on our poets. Scott recaptured the adventurous and chivalric spirit of the Middle Age : Coleridge caught some of its glamour : its deeper life was brought home to English readers by Carey's Miltonic translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* ; finally Keats, the worshipper of beauty, was fascinated by its pictorial qualities as much as by the fair forms of Attic art, and taught Tennyson and other Victorians to see them through his eyes.

To give expression to this new mass of thought and feeling the Romantic poets recovered and augmented 'our ancient English dower' of poetic diction and metres, and ransacked the world for subjects familiar or strange. But their thoughts and feelings were still too new, abstract, and inchoate, too little absorbed into the common national stock of thought and feeling, to take readily the great, old, classic forms of poetry, 'simple, sensuous, passionate.' Their own minds were still their favourite haunt and the main region of their song. In consequence, their productions, except in lyric, remained fragmentary, like a Gothic cathedral without the nave. How well Shelley knew this is shown by his acclamation of Byron's *Don Juan* as the one great long poem of the age. *Don Juan* is certainly a criticism of life, simple and sensuous if not passionate; but a poem so destitute of principle and design, of elevation in thought and feeling, cannot be taken to represent fitly an age which, if it produced no great long poem, was perhaps richer than any in the stuff of poetry. Wordsworth's *Prelude* has a better claim, but it was not published till 1850.

Before Victoria's accession all these Romantic poets were dead except Wordsworth, and Wordsworth had fallen silent. The new generation of Victorians continued the Romantic tradition with more art if with less inspiration. Yet, though their subjects and methods are much the same, their spirit is somehow different. With the transference of power to the middle classes, the millennial hopes of the Romantics had subsided into a vague belief in progress and the spread of civilization. Politics ceased for a time to inspire, and poetry became less general,

busying itself more with individual lives and fates. Hence the great Victorian invention of the Dramatic Monologue or Dramatic Lyric. In personal lyric the Victorians, though varied and accomplished, are less spontaneous than the Romantics ; and in the long poem they are no more successful : *The Ring and the Book* is a series of Dramatic Monologues with a common centre ; *In Memoriam* is a series of elegies on one theme ; the *Idylls of the King* are a palace tenanted by ghosts. The thoughts of the Victorians on individual life and fate were all clouded with doubt, cast by the growing conflict between science and faith. Browning and Tennyson, so unlike in externals, are one in creed : both cling—the one confidently, the other desperately—to the hope of personal immortality ; Browning turning the souls of his creations this way and that to catch the facet that reflects the Sun of Righteousness ; Tennyson confronting the grim vision of a dead and meaningless world in the strength of his own deathless love for his friend. The eclipse of faith, which Arnold faced with stoical resignation, Swinburne welcomed with pagan glee. Rossetti and Morris turned aside from a distraught and sordid age to seek beauty for its own sake in the distant and the past. Meredith and Hardy accepted, though to very different issues, the supposed conclusions of a naturalistic science. The voice of faith was heard in the poems of Christina Rossetti, and again, towards the end of the century, in those of Francis Thompson. By that time also the troubles which so oppressed the earlier Victorians began to weigh on men less heavily, and poetry once more turned outward, to the burdens and glories of Empire.

Mr. Kipling, who led the enterprise, may be called our only Edwardian. Of the later Georgians it is too soon to speak: they are still too near us. Only this may be said, that no age has been richer in poets of at least the second rank, or has better maintained our poetic tradition of high-mindedness, decency, and romance, or our national character as lovers of truth and liberty.

I have to thank Mr. Robert Bridges for permission to include 'There is a hill beside the silver Thames', Mr. Thomas Hardy for 'Friends Beyond', Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Messrs. Methuen & Co. for 'Ford o' Kabul River', Messrs. Burns & Oates for Francis Thompson's 'The Hound of Heaven', Messrs. Chatto & Windus and Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for Stevenson's 'Christmas at Sea', Messrs. Constable & Co. for Meredith's 'Ballad of Past Meridian', Messrs. Ellis for Rossetti's 'Last Three from Trafalgar', Mr. William Heinemann for Swinburne's 'When the Hounds of Spring' (from *Atalanta in Calydon*) and 'Sun, that hast lightened' (from *Erechtheus*), Mr. John Lane for Sir William Watson's 'Father of the Forest', Mr. John Murray for Browning's 'Echetlos', and the Scottish Text Society for the text of Dunbar.

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Bruce and the Laynder

[Bruce had invaded Ireland to support his brother Edward's claim to the Irish crown, and was retreating before superior enemy forces, when this incident occurred.]

THE king has herd ane woman cry
 And askit quhat that wes in hy.
 'It is ane landar, schir,' said ane,
 'That hir childyne richt now has tane,
 And mon lewe now behynd us her,
 Tharforscho makis yon evill cher.'
 The king said, 'Certis, it war pité
 That scho in that poynt left suld be,
 For certis, I trow, that is no man
 That he ne will rew up-on woman.'
 His host all than arrestit he,
 And gert ane tent soyne stentit be,
 And gert her gang in hastely;
 And othir women till be hir by,
 Quhill scho delyver wes he bad;
 And syne furth on his wayis raid:
 And how scho furth suld caryit be,
 Or evir he fure, than ordanit he.
 This wes a full gret curtasy,
 That sic a king and swa mychty
 Gert his men duell on this maner,
 Bot for a full pouir laynder.

hy] haste.
 mon] must.
 fure] fared.

landar] laundress.
 lewe] stay.
 duell] stay.

childyne] labour.
 stentit] pitched.

WILLIAM LANGLAND 1332-1400 (?)

Bell-the-Cat

[The cat is the aged King Edward III; the kitten is his heir-apparent, afterwards Richard II; the rats and mice are the commons, great and small.]

Wiþ þat ran þere a route · of ratones at ones,
 And smale mys myd hem · mo þen a þousande,
 And comen to a conseille · for here comune profit;
 For a cat of a courte · cam whan hym lyked,
 And ouerlepe hem lyȝtlich · and lauȝte hem at his wille,
 And pleyde wiþ hem perilouslych · and possed hem aboute.
 'For doute of dyuerse dredes · we dar nouȝte wel loke;
 And ȝif we grucche of his gamen · he wil greue vs alle,
 Cracche vs, or clowe vs · and in his cloches holde,
 That vs lotheth þe lyf · or he lete vs passe.
 Myȝte we wiþ any witte · his wille withstonde,
 We myȝte be lordes aloft · and lyuen at owre ese.'

A raton of renon · most renable of tonge,
 Seide for a souereygne · help to hym-selue;—
 'I haue ysein segges,' quod he · 'in þe cite of london
 Beren bȝes ful briȝte · abouten here nekkes,
 And some colers of crafty werk; · vncoupled þei wenden
 Boȝe in wareine & in waste · where hem leue lyketh;
 And otherwhile þei aren elles-where · as I here telle.
 Were þere a belle on here beiȝ · bi Iesu, as me thynketh,
 Men myȝte wite where þei went · and awei renne!
 And riȝt so,' quod þat ratoun · 'reson me sheweth,
 To bugge a belle of brasse · or of briȝte syluer,
 And knitten on a colere · for owre comune profit,
 And hangen it vp-on þe cattes hals · þanne here we mowen
 Where he ritt or rest · or renneth to playe.

ratones] rats. lauȝte] caught. possed] pushed.
 or] ere. renable] loquacious. segges] men. bȝes] collars.
 leue] dearly. bugge] buy. hals] neck. ritt] rideth, moveth.

And ȝif him list for to laike · þenne loke we mowen,
And peren in his presence · þer-while hym plaic liketh,
And ȝif him wrattheth, be ywar · and his weye shonye.'

Alle þis route of ratones · to þis reson þei assented.
Ac þo þe belle was ybouȝt · and on þe beize hanged,
þere ne was ratoun in alle þe route · for alle þe rewme of
Fraunce,

þat dorst haue ybounden þe belle · aboute þe cattis nekke,
Ne hangen it aboute þe cattes hals · al Engelonde to
wynne;

And helden hem vnhardy · and here conseille feble,
And leten here laboure lost · & alle here longe studyc.

A mous þat moche good · couthe, as me thouȝte,
Stroke forth sternly · and stode biforn hem alle,
And to þe route of ratones · reherced þese wordes ;
'Thouȝ we culled þe catte · ȝut sholde þer come another,
To cracchy vs and al owre kynde · þouȝ we crope vnder
benches.

For-þi I conseille alle þe comunc · to lat þe catte worthe,
And be we neufer so bolde · þe belle hym to shewe;
For I herde my sire seyn · is seuene ȝere ypassed,
þere þe catte is a kitoun · þe courte is ful elyng ;
þat witnisseth holiwrite · who-so wil it rede,

Ve terre ubi puer rex est, &c.

For may no renke þere rest haue · for ratones bi nyȝte ;
þe while he cacchey conynges · he coueiteth nouȝt owre
caroyne,

But fet hym al with venesoun · defame we hym neuerc.
For better is a litel losse · þan a longe sorwe,
þe mase amonge vs alle · þouȝ we mysse a schrewe.
For many manus malt · we mys wolde destruye,
And also ȝe route of ratones · rende mennes clothes,

laike] sport. Ac] But. couthe] knew. Stroke] Brushed.
culled] killed. crope] crept. For-þi] Therefore. worthe] be.
elyng] wretched. *Ve terre . . .*] Woe to the land when the king is
a child. renke] man. conynges] conies. mase] confusion.
schrewe] sinner.

Nere þat cat of þat courte · þat can ȝow ouerlepe ;
 For had ȝe ratten ȝowre wille · ȝe couthe nouȝt reule
 ȝowreselue.

I sey for me,' quod þe mous · 'I se so mykel after,
 Shal neuer þe cat ne þe kitoun · bi my conseille be greued,
 Ne carpyng of þis coler · þat costed me neuere.

And þouȝ it had coste me catel · biknowen it I nolde,
 But suffre as hym-self wolde · to do as hym liketh,
 Coupled & vncoupled · to cacche what thei mowe.

For-þi vche a wise wiȝte I warne · wite wel his owne.'—

What þis meteles bemeneth · ȝe men þat be merye,
 Deuine ȝe, for I ne dar · bi dere god in heuene !

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

1340-1400

The Pardoner's Tale

IN Flaundres whylom was a companye
 Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,
 As ryot, hasard, stewes, and tavernes,
 Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
 They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day and night,
 And ete also and drinnen over hir might,
 Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifysse
 With-in that develes temple, in cursed wyse,
 By superfluitee abominable ;
 Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
 That it is grisly for to here hem swere ;
 Our blissed lordes body they to-tere ;
 Hem thoughte Jewes rente him noght y-nough ;
 And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.
 And right anon than comen tombesteres

Nere] Were there not. carpyng] talking. biknowen] acknowledge. volde] would not. vche] each. wite] know. meteles] dream. giternes] guitars. tombesteres] tumblers.

Fetys and smale, and yonge fruytesterces,
 Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
 Whiche been the verray develes officeres
 To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
 That is annexed un-to glotonye ;
 The holy writ take I to my witnesse,
 That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.

Thise ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
 Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,
 Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke ;
 And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke
 Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave ;
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,
 ‘ Go bet,’ quod he, ‘ and axe redily,
 What cors is this that passeth heer forby ;
 And look that thou reporte his name wel.’

‘ Sir,’ quod this boy, ‘ it nedeth never-a-del.
 It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres ;
 He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres ;
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
 For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright ;
 Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth,
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
 And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two,
 And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo.
 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence :
 And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
 Me thinketh that it were necessarie
 For to be war of swich an adversarie :
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
 Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more.’
 ‘ By seinte Marie,’ seyde this taverner,
 ‘ The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,

Fetys] Neat. fruytesterces] fruitsellers. pryme] 9 a.m.
 knave] boy. bet] better, faster. never-a-del] not a whit.
 clepeth] call. Beth] Be.

Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village,
Both man and womman, child and hyne, and page.

I trowe his habitacioun be there;
To been avysed greet wisdom it were,
Er that he dide a man a dishonour.'

'Ye, goddes armes,' quod this ryotour,

'Is it swich peril with him for to mete?

I shal him seke by wey and eek by stretc,

I make avow to goddes digne bones!

Herkneth, felawes, we three been al ones;

Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other,

And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,

And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth;

He shal be slain, whiche that so many sleeth,

By goddes dignitee, er it be night.'

Togidres han thise three her trouthes pligt,

To live and dyen ech of hem for other,

As though he were his owene y-boren brother.

And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage,

And forth they goon towardes that village,

Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,

And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn,

And Cristes blessed body they to-rente—

'Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him hente.'

Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,

Right as they wolde han troden over a style,

An old man and a povre with hem mette.

This olde man ful mekely hem grette,

And seyde thus, 'now, lordes, god yow see!'

The proudest of thise ryotours three

Answerde agayn, 'what? carl, with sory grace,

• Why artow al forwrapped save thy face?

Why livestow so longe in so greet age?'

This olde man gan loke in his visage,

And seyde thus, 'for I ne can nat finde

Henne] Hence.
hente] take.

hyne] hind, servant.

digne] worthy.

A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,
 Neither in citee nor in no village,
 That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age ;
 And therfore moot I han myn age stille,
 As longe time as it is goddes wille.

Nc deeth, allas ! ne wol nat han my lyf ;
 Thus walke I, lyk a restlees caityf,
 And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
 I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
 And seye, " leve moder, leet me in !
 Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin !
 Allas ! whan shul my bones been at reste ?
 Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
 That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
 Ye ! for an heyre clout to wrappc me !"
 But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
 For which ful pale and welked is my face.

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisyc
 To speken to an old man vilenyc,
 But he trespassse in wordc, or elles in dede.
 In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,
 " Agayns an old man, hoor upon his heed,
 Ye sholde aryse ; " wherfor I yevc yow reed,
 Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now,
 Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
 In age, if that ye so longe abyde ;
 And god be with yow, wher ye go or ryde.
 I moot go thider as I have to go.'

' Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt nat so,'
 Seyde this other hasardour anon ;
 ' Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint John !
 Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,
 That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.
 Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his aspye,
 Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it aby'e,

leve] dear.
 reed] counsel.

welked] withered.
 aspye] spy.

But] Except.
 aby'e] answer.

By god, and by thy holy sacrament !
 For soothly thou art oon of his assent,
 To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef ! '

' Now, sirs,' quod he, ' if that yow be so leef
 To finde Deeth, turne up this crooked wey,
 For in that grove I laste him, by my fey,
 Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde ;
 Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing hyde.
 See ye that ook ? right ther ye shul him finde.
 God save yow, that boghte agayn mankinde,
 And yow amende ! '—thus seyd this olde man.
 And everich of thise ryotoures ran,
 Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
 Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde
 Wel ny an eighte bussheis, as hem thoughte.
 No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,
 But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
 For that the florins been so faire and brighte,
 That doun they sette hem by this precious hord.
 The worste of hem he spake the firste word.

' Brethren,' quod he, ' tak kepe what I seye ;
 My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye.
 This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
 In mirthe and jolitee our lyf to liven,
 And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
 Ey ! goddes precious dignitee ! who wende
 To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace ?
 But mighte this gold be caried fro this place
 Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres—
 For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures—
 Than were we in heigh felicitee.
 But trewely, by daye it may nat be ;
 Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
 And for our owene tresor doon us honge.

sey] faith. *bourde]* jest. *wende]* weened.

boghte agayn] redeemed. *doon us honge]* cause us to be hanged.

kepe] heed.

This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.
Wherfore I rede that cut among us alle
Be drawe, and lat see wher the cut wol falle ;
And he that hath the cut with herte blythe
Shal renne to the toun, and that ful swythe,
And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.
And two of us shul kepen subtilly
This tresor wel ; and, if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is night, we wol this tresor carie
By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best.'
That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest,
And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle ;
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle ;
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
And al-so sone as that he was gon,
That oon of hem spak thus un-to that other,
'Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon ;
And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departed been among us three.
But natholes, if I can shape it so
That it departed were among us two,
Hadde I nat doon a frendes torn to thee ?'
That other answerde, 'I noot how that may be
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye,
What shal we doon, what shal we to him seye ?'
'Shal it be conseil ?' seyde the firste shrewe,
'And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute.'
'I graunte,' quod that other, 'out of doute,
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye.'
'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost wel we be tweye,
And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
Look whan that he is set, and right anoon
swythe] speedily. neot] wot not.

Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye ;
 And I shal ryue him thurgh the sydes tweye
 Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in game,
 And with thy dagger look thou do the same ;
 And than shal al this gold departed be,
 My dere frend, bitwixen me and thee :
 Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
 And pleye at dees right at our owene will'e.
 And thus accorded been thise shrewes tweye
 To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

This yongest, which that wente un-to the toun,
 Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
 The beautee of thise florins newe and brighte.
 'O lord !' quod he, ' if so were that I mighthe
 Have al this tresor to my-self allone,
 Ther is no man that liveth under the trone
 Of god, that sholde live so mery as I !'
 And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
 Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye,
 Witch which he mighthe sleen his felawes tweye ;
 For-why the feend fond him in swich lyvinge,
 That he had leue him to sorwe bringe,
 For this was outrely his fulle entente
 To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente.
 And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
 Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie,
 And preyed him, that he him wolde sellc
 Som poyson, that he mighthe his ratten quelle ;
 And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,
 That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,
 And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighthe,
 On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte.

The pothecarie answerde, ' and thou shalt have
 A thing that, al-so god my soule save,
 In al this world ther nis no creature,

For-why] Because.

outrely] utterly.

hawe] yard.

wreke] avenge.

That etc or dronke hath of this confiture
 Noght but the mountance of a corn of whete,
 That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete ;
 Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse whyle
 Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle ;
 This poysen is so strong and violent.'

This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
 This poysen in a box, and sith he ran
 In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man,
 And borwed [of] him large botels three ;
 And in the two his poysen poured he ;
 The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.
 For al the night he shoop him for to swinke
 In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
 And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
 Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
 To his felawes agayn repaireth he.

What nedeth it to sermone of it more ?
 For right as they had cast his deeth bifore,
 Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.
 And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon,
 ' Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,
 And afterward we wol his body berie.'
 And with that word it happed him, par cas,
 To take the botel ther the poysen was,
 And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,
 For which anon they storven bothe two.

But, certes, I suppose that Avicen
 Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen,
 Mo wonder signes of empoysoning
 Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir ending.
 Thus ended been thise homicydes two,
 And eek the false empoysoner also.

mountance] amount. forlete] leave. sterve] die.
 sith] after that. shoop] planned. swinke] labour.
 par cas] by chance. Avicen] Avicenna, an Arab physician.
 fen] chapter.

ROBERT HENRYSON 1435 (?)-1506 (?)

*The Taill of the Uponlandis Mous and the
Burges Mous*

ESOPE, my author, makis mentioune
 Of twa myis, and thay wer sisteris deir,
 Of quhome the eldest duelt in ane borous toun,
 The uther wynnit uponland, weill neir,
 Soliter, quhile under busk, quhile under breir,
 Quhilis in the corne, and uther mennis skaith,
 As outlawis dois and levis on thair waith.

This rural mous into the winter tyde
 Had hunger, cauld, and tholit gret distres.
 The uther mous that in the burgh can byde
 Was gild brother and maid ane fre burgess;
 Toll fre also, but custum mair or les,
 And fredome had to ga quhair ever scho list,
 Amang the cheis in ark, and meill in kist.

Ane tyme quhen scho was full and unfutesair,
 Scho tuik in mynde hir sister uponland,
 And langit for to heir of hir weiffair,
 To se quhat lyfe scho led under the wand:
 Bairfute, allone, with pykestalf in hir hand,
 As pure pilgryme scho passit out of toun,
 To seik hir sister baith our daill and doun.

Furth mony wilsum wayis can scho walk,
 Throw moss and mure, throw bankis, busk, and breir,
 Scho ran cryand, quhill scho come to ane balk:

borous toun] burgh. wynnit] dwelt. uponland] in the
 country. skaith] damage. waith] hunting. tholit] endured.
 can] did. but] without. custum] tax. kist] chest.
 wand] osier. wilsum] lonesome. quhill] till. balk] ridge.

' Cum furth to me, my awin sister deir ;
 Cry peip anis ! ' With that the mousse culd heir,
 And knew hir voce, as kynnismen will do,
 Be verray kynd ; and furth scho come hir to.

The hartlie joy, Lord God ! gif ye had sene,
 Was kythit quhen that thir twa sisteris met ;
 And gret kyndnes was schawin thame betuene,
 For quhillis thay leuch, and quhillis for joy thay gret,
 Quhile kissit sweit, quhillis in armes plet ;
 And thus thay fure, quhill soberit was thair mude,
 Syne fute for fute unto the chalmer yude.

As I hard say, it was ane sober wane,
 Of fog and fairne full febilie was maid,
 Ane sillie scheill under ane steidfast stane,
 Of quhilk the entres was not hie nor braid ;
 And in the samyn thay went but mair abaid,
 Withoutin fire or candill birnand bricht,
 For commonlie sic pykeris luifes nocth licht.

Quhen thay war lugeit thus, thir sillie myis,
 The youngest sister in to hir butterie glide,
 And brocht furth nuttis and candill in steid of spyce ;
 Gif this was gude fair, I do it on thame beside.
 The burges mous promptit furth in pride,
 And said, ' Sister, is this your daylie fude ? '
 ' Quhy not,' quod scho, ' is not this meit richt gude ? '

' Na, be my saule, I think it bot ane scorne.'
 ' Madame,' quod scho, ' ye be the mair to blame.
 My mother said, sister, quhen we war borne,

anis] once.	Be] By	kynd] nature.	kythit] shown.
gret] wept.	plet] folded.	mude] mood.	yude] went.
wane] abode.	fog] moss.	scheill] shelter.	abaid] delay.
pykeris] pickers, thieves.		do it on thame beside] leave it to them.	

That I and ye lay baith within ane wame :
 I keip the rait and custome of my dame,
 And of my leving in to povertie,
 For landis haif we nane in propertie.'

' My fair sister,' quod scho, ' haif me excusit,
 This rude dyat and I can not accord ;
 To tender meit my stomok is ay usit,
 For quhulis I fair als weill as ony lord ;
 Thir widderit peis and nuttis, or thay be bord,
 Will brek my teith, and mak my wame full sklender,
 Quhilk was befoir usit to meitis tender.'

' Weill, weill, sister,' quod the turale mous,
 ' Gif it pleis yow, sic thing as ye se heir,
 Baith meit and drink, herberie and hous,
 Sall be your awin, will ye remane all yeir ;
 Ye sall it haif with blith and mery cheir,
 And that sould mak the maissis that ar rude,
 Amang friendis, richt tender and wonder gude.

' Quhat pleasure is in feistis delicate,
 The quhilk ar gevin with ane glowmand brow ?
 Ane gentill hart is better recreate
 With blith courage, than seith to him ane kow :
 Ane modicum is mair for till allow,
 Sua that gude will be carver at the dais,
 Than throwin vult and mony spycit mais.'

For all hir merie exhortatioun,
 This burges mous had litill will to sing,
 Bot hevilie scho kest hir browis doun,
 For all the daynteis that scho culd hir bring.
 Yit at the last scho said, half in hething,
 ' Sister, this victuall and your rovell feist
 May weill suffice unto ane ruralle beist.

Thir] These. or] ere. herberie] lodging. maissis] messes.
 seith] seethc. throwin vult] cross face. hething] scorn.

'Let be this hole, and cum unto my place,
 I sall to yow schaw be experience
 My Gude Fryday is better nor your Pace ;
 My dische-lilkingis is wirth your haill expence.
 I haif housis anew of grit defensce ;
 Of cat nor fall nor trap I haif na dreid.'
 'I grant,' quod scho ; and on togidder yeid.

In fStubbill array throw rankest gres and corne,
 And under bushis, previlie culd thay creip.
 The eldest was the gide and went besorne,
 The younger to hit wayis tuik gude keip.
 On nycht thay ran, and on the day can sleip ;
 Quhill in the morning, or the laverok sang,
 Thay fand the toun, and in blithlie culd gang.

Not fer fra thine unto ane wirthie wane
 This burges brocht thame sone quhair thay suld be ;
 Without God speid thair herberie was tane
 Into ane spence with victuell grit plentie ;
 Baith cheis and butter upoun thair skelfis lie,
 And flesche and fische aneuch, baith fresche and salt,
 And sekkis full of meill and eik of malt.

Ester quhen thay dispositit war to dyne,
 Withoutin grace thay wesche and went to meit,
 With all coursis that cuikis culd defyne,
 Muttoun and beif strukkin in tailycis greit ;
 Ane lordis fair thus culd thay counterfeit,
 Except ane thing, thay drank the watter cleir
 In steid of wyne, bot yit thay maid gude cheir.

With blith upcast and merie countenance,
 The eldest sister sperit at hit gest,
 Gif that scho be ressone fand differrence
 Betuix that chalmer and hit sarie nest.

Pace] Easter. ancw] enough. fall] trap. laverok] lark.
 culd] did. thine] thence. spene] larder. strukkin] cut.
 tailycis] slices. upcast] raillery. sperit] asked.

'Yea dame,' quod scho, 'bot how lang will this last?'
 'For evermair, I wait, and langer to.'
 'Gif it be swa, ye ar at eis,' quod scho.

Till eik thair cheir ane subcharge furth scho brocht,
 Ane plait of grottis, and ane dische full of meill;
 Thraf caikis als I trow scho spairit noct,
 Aboundantlie about hir for to deill;
 And man fulle fyne scho brocht in steid of geill,
 And ane quhite candill out of ane coffer stall,
 In steid of spyce to gust thair mouth withall.

Thus maid thay merie quhill thay mycht na mair,
 And, 'haill, yuill, haill!' thay cryit upone hie.
 Yit efter joy oftymes cumis cair,
 And troubill efter grit prosperitie.
 Thus as thay sat in all thair jolitie,
 The spensar come with keyis in his hand,
 Oppynnit the dur, and thame at denner fand.

Thay taryit noct to wasche, as I suppois,
 Bot on to ga quha that mycht formest win.
 The burges had ane hoill, and in scho gois;
 Hir sister had na hoill to hide hir in;
 To se that selie mous it was grit sin,
 So desolate and will of ane gode reid;
 For verray dreid scho fell in swoun neir deid.

Bot, as God wald, it fell ane happie cace;
 The spensar had na laser for to bide,
 Nouther to seik nor serche, to skar nor chace,
 Bot on he went, and left the dur up wyde.
 The bald burges his passing weill hes spyde;
 Out of hir hoill scho come and cryit on hie,
 'How fair ye, sister? cry peip, quhair ever ye be?'

wait] wot.	eik] eke out.	subcharge] second course.
grottis] groats.	Thraf] Unleavened.	man] cake.
geill] jelly.	spensar] butler.	will of] astray from.
cace] chance.		

This turall mous lay flatling on the ground,
And for the deith scho was full sair dreidand,
For till hir hart straik mony wofull stound,
As in ane fever scho trimblit fute and hand ;
And quhen hir sister in sic ply hir fand,
For verray pietie scho began to greit,
Syne confort hir with wordis hunny sweit.

‘ Quhy ly ye thus ? ryse up, my sister deir,
Cum to your meit, this perrell is over past.’
The uther answerit hir with hevie cheir,
‘ I may not eit, sa sair I am agast ;
I had lever thir fourtie dayis fast,
With watter caill, and to gnaw benis and peis,
Than all your feist in this dreid and diseis.’

With fair tretie yit scho gart hir upryse,
And to the burde thay baith to gidder sat ;
And skantlie had thay drunkin anis or twyse,
Quhen in come Gib-Hunter, our jolie cat,
And bad God speid : the burges up with that,
And till hir hoill scho went as fyre on flint :
Bawdronis the uther be the bak hes hint.

Fra fute to fute he kest hir to and fra,
Quhilis up, quhilis doun, als cant as ony kid ;
Quhilis wald he lat hir rin under the stra,
Quhilis wald he wink, and play with hir bukhid.
Thus to the selie mous grit pane he did,
Quhill at the last, throw fortoun and gude hap,
Betuix the dorsour and the wall scho crap.

And up in haist behind the parraling
Scho clam sa hie, that Gilbert mycht not get hir,
Syne be the cluke thair crafteleie can hing,
Till he was gane, hir cheir was all the better.

stound] pang. ply] plight. caill] broth. Bawdronis] Puss. hint] caught. cant] playful. bukhid] hide-and-seek. dorsour, parraling] hanging, curtain. cluke] claw.

Syne doun scho lap quhen thair was nane to let hir,
 And to the burges mous loud can scho cry :
 ' Fairweill, sister, thy feist heir I defy !

' Thy mangerie is mingit all with cair,
 Thy guse is gude, thy gansell sour as gall ;
 The subcharge of thy service is bot sair,
 Sa sall thou find heirefterwart may fall.
 I thank yone courtyne and yone perpall wall
 Of my defence now fra yone crewell beist.
 Almychtie God, keip me fra sic ane feist !

' Wer I in to the kith that I come fra,
 For weill nor wa suld I never cum agane.'
 With that scho tuik hir leve and furth can ga,
 Quhilis throw the corne, and quhilis throw the plane ;
 Quhen scho was furth and fre, scho was full fane,
 And merilie merkit unto the mure :
 I can not tell how efterwart scho furc.

Bot I hard say scho passit to hir den,
 Als warme als woll, suppois it was not greit,
 Full benelie stuffit, baith but and ben,
 Of peiss, and nuttis, beinis, ry, and quhecit ;
 Quhen ever scho list, scho had aneuch to eit,
 In quiet and eis, withouttin ony dreid ;
 Bot to hir sisteris feist na mair scho yeid.

let] prevent. defy] renounce. mangerie] eating.
 mingit] mingled. gansell] sauce. fall] besfall. perpall]
 partition. kith] (known) place. merkit] took her way. woll]
 wool. suppois] though. benelie] comfortably. but and ben]
 out-room and in-room, kitchen and parlour.

WILLIAM DUNBAR 1465 (?)-1520 (?)

The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins

OFF Februar the fyiftene nycht,
 Full lang befoir the dayis lycht,
 I lay in till a trance ;
 And then I saw baith hevin and hell :
 Me thocht, amangis the feyndis fell,
 Mahoun gart cry ane dance
 Off schrewis that wer nevir schrevin,
 Aganiss the feist of Fasternis evin,
 To mak thair observance ;
 He bad gallandis ga graith a gyiss,
 And kast vp gamountis in the skyiss,
 That last came out of France.

Heilie harlottes on hawtane wyiss
 Come in with mony sindrie gyiss,
 Bot yit luche nevir Mahoun :
 Quhill preistis come in with bair schevin nekkis,
 Than all the feyndis lewche, and maid gekkis,
 Blak Belly and Bawsy Brown.

‘Lat se,’ quod he, ‘Now quha begynnis ;’
 With that the fowll Sevin Deidly Synnis
 Begowth to leip at anis.
 And first of all in dance wes Pryd,
 With hair wyld bak and bonet on syd,
 Lyk to mak vaistie wanis ;
 And round abowt him, as a quheill,
 Hang all in rumpillis to the heill

Mahoun] Mahomet, i. e. the devil.
 graith a gyiss] prepare a masque.
 Heilie] Proud.
 Begowth] Began.

schrevin] shriven.
 gamountis] gambols.
 gekkis] mocks.

hawtane] haughty.
 vaistie] empty.

His kethat for the nanis :

Mony proud trumperour with him trippit
Throw skaldand fyre, ay as thay skippit
Thay gyrnd with hiddouss granis.

Than Yre come in with sturt and stryfe ;
His hand wes ay vpoun his knyfe,

He brandeist lyk a beir :

Bostaris, braggaris, and barganeris,
Eftir him passit in to pairis,

All bodin in feir of weir ;

In iakkis and stryppis and bonnettis of steill,
Thair leggis wer chenyecit to the heill,
Ffrawart wes their affeir :

Sum vpoun vdir with brandis best,

Sum jaggit vthiris to the heft,

With knyvis that scherp cowd scheir.

Nixt in the dance followit Invyn,

Fild full of feid and fellony,

Hid malyce and dispyle ;

Ffor pryyie hatrent that tratour trymlit.

Him followit mony freik dissymlit,

With senyeit wurdis quhyte ;

And flattereris in to menis facis ;

And bakbyttaris of sindry racis,

To ley that had delyte ;

And rownaris of fals lesingis ;

Allace ! that courtis of noble kingis

Of thame can nevir be quyte.

Nixt him in dans come Cuvatyee,

Rute of all evill and grund of vyse,

kethat] cassock. nanis] nonce. trumperour] cheat.
sturt] turbulence. barganeris] wranglers. bodin in feir of weir]
arrayed in guise of war. chenyecit] clad in chain-mail.
Ffrawart] Froward. affeir] bearing. best] beat. jaggit]
pricked. feid] feud. freik] wag. rownaris] whisperers.
lesingis] lies.

That nevir cowd be content ;
 Catyvis, wrechis and okkeraris,
 Hud-pykis, huardaris and gadderaris,
 All with that warlo went :

Out of thair throttis thay schot on vdder
 Hett moltin gold, me thocht a fudder,
 As fyreflawcht maist fervent ;
 Ay as thay tomit thame of schot,
 Ffeyndis fild thame new vp to the thrott
 With gold of alkin prent.

Syne Sweirnes, at the secound bidding,
 Come lyk a sow out of a midding,
 Full sleepy wes his grunyie :
 Mony sweir bumbard belly huddroun,
 Mony slute daw and sleepy duddroun,
 Him serwit ay with sounyie ;
 He drew thame furth in till a chenyie,
 And Belliall, with a brydill renyie,
 Evir lascht thame on the lunyie :
 In dance thay war so slaw of feit,
 Thay gaif thame in the fyre a heit,
 And maid thame quicker of counyie.

Than Lichery, that lathly corss,
 Berand lyk a bawkit hors,
 And Ydilness did him leid ;
 Thair wes with him ane ugly sort,
 And mony stynkand fowll tramort,
 That had in syn bene deid.
 Quhen thay wer entrit in the dance,

okkeraris]	usurers.	Hud-pykis]	Misers.	huardaris]	hoarders.	
gadderaris]	gatherers.	warlo]	wizard.	fudder]	hundred-weight.	
					fyreflawcht]	wildfire.
					tomit]	emptied.
					alkin prent]	all kind(s) of stamp.
					Sweirnes]	Sloth.
					grunyie]	snout.
					bumbard belly huddroun]	tun-bellied glutton.
					slute]	sluttish.
					daw]	sluggard.
					duddroun]	stoven.
					sounyie]	care.
					lunyie]	loins.
					counyie]	apprehension.
					Berand]	Neighing.
					tramort]	corpse.

Thay wer full strenge of countenance,
Lyk turkass birnand reid.

Than the fowl monstir Gluttony,
Off wame vnsasiable and gredy,
To dance he did him dress :
Him followit mony fowl drunckart,
With can and collep, cop and quart,
In surffet and excess ;
Full mony a waistless wallydrag,
With wamiss vnweildable, did furth wag,
In creische that did incress ;
Drynk ! ay thay cryit, with mony a gaip ;
The feyndis gaif thame hait leid to laip,
Their lovery wes na less.

Na menstrallis playit to thame but dowt,
Ffor glemen thair wer haldin owt,
Be day, and eik by nycht ;
Except a menstrall that slew a man,
Swa till his heretage he wan,
And entirt be breif of richt.

Than cryd Mahoun for a Heleiland padyane ;
Syne ran a feynd to feche Makfadyane,
Ffar northwart in a nuke ;
Be he the correnoch had done schout,
Erschemen so gadderit him abowt,
In Hell grit rowme thay tuke.
Thae tarmegantis, with tag and tatter,
Ffull lowd in Ersche begowth to clatter,
And rowp lyk revin and ruke :
The Devill sa devit wes with thair yell,
That in the deepest pot of hell
He smorit thame with smuke.

turkass] pincers. wame] belly. wallydrag] weakling.
creische] grease. lovery] desire. but] without. padyane] pageant. Be] By the time that. Erschemen] Gaels.
rowp] croak. devit] deafened. smorit] smothered.

A N O N.

c. 1500

The Nut-Brown Maid

B E it right or wrong, these men among
 B On women do complaine ;
 Affermyng this, how that it is
 A labour spent in vaine
 To love them wele ; for never a dele
 They love a man agayne ;
 For lete a man do what he can,
 Ther favour to attayne,
 Yet yf a newe to them pursue,
 Ther furst trew lover than
 Laboureth for nought ; for from her thought
 He is a bannished man.

I say not nay, but that all day
 It is bothe writ and sayde
 That womans fayth is, as who saythe,
 All utterly decayed :
 But nevertheless, right good witnes
 In this case might be layde
 That they love trewe and contynew ;
 Recorde the Nutbrowne maide,
 Whiche from her love, whan, her to prove,
 He cam to make his mone,
 Wolde not departe, for in her herte
 She loyld but him allone.

Than betwene us let us discusse,
 What was all the maner
 Betwene them too : we wyl also
 Telle all the peyne in-fere

among] sometimes. than] then. Recorde] Shall
 bear witness. in-fere] in company.

That she was in ; now I begynne,
 Soo that ye me answerē.
 Wherfore alle ye that present bē,
 I pray you geve an eare.
 I am the knyght, I cum be nyght,
 As secret as I can,
 Sayng ;—‘ Alas, thus stondyth the case,
 I am a bannisshēd man.’

And I, your wyll for to fulfylle,
 In this wyl not refuse,
 Trusting to shewe, in wordis fewe,
 That men have an ill use
 To their owne shame, wymen to blame,
 And causeles them accuse.
 Therefore to you, I answerē now,
 Alle wymen to excuse :—
 ‘ Myn owne hert dere, with you what chiere ?
 I prey you telle anoon ;
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
 I love but you alone.’

‘ It stondith so, a deed is do,
 Wherfore moche harme shal growe :
 My desteny is for to dey
 A shameful dethe I trow,
 Or ellis to flee ; the ton must bē,
 None other wey I knowe
 But to withdrawe, as an outlaw,
 And take me to my bowe ;
 Wherfore adew, my owne hert trewe,
 None other rede I can,
 For I muste to the grene wode goo,
 Alone, a bannisshēd man.’

the ton] the one.

rede I can] counsel I know.

‘ O Lorde, what is this worldis blisse,
That chaungeth as the mone?
My somers day, in lusty may,
Is derked before the none;
I here you saye “ farwel ” ; nay, nay,
We departe not soo sone;
Why say ye so, wheder wyl ye goo,
Alas ! what have ye done?
All my welfare to sorow and care
Shulde chaunge, yf ye were gon ;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
I love but you alone.’

'I can beleve, it shal you greve,
And somwhat you distractyne ;
But aftyrwarde, your paynes harde
Within a day or tweyne
Shal sone a-slake, and ye shal take
Confort to you agayne.
Why shuld ye nought? for to take thought
Your labur were in vayne,
And thus I do, and pray you, loo !
As hertely as I can ;
For I muste too the grene wood goo,
Alone, a bannished man.'

' Now syth that ye have shewed to me
The secret of your mynde,
I shalbe playne to you agayne,
Lyke as ye shal me fynde.
Syth it is so, that ye wyll goo,
I woll not leve behynde ;
Shal never be sayd, the Nutbrowne mayd
Was to her love unkind ;

derked] darkened. departe] part. wheder] whither.
distrayne] disquiet. a-slake] lessen. syth] since.
leve] remain.

Make you redy, for soo am I,
 All-though it were anoon ;
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
 I love but you alone.'

' Yet I you rede to take good hede,
 What men wyl thinke and sey ;
 Of yonge and olde it shalbe tolde,
 That ye be gone away,
 Your wanton wylle for to fulfylle,
 In grene wood you to play,
 And that ye myght from your delyte
 Noo lenger make delay.
 Rather than ye shuld thus for me
 Be called an ylle woman,
 Yet wolde I to the grene wodde goo,
 Alone, a banyshed man.'

' Though it be songe of olde and yonge,
 That I shuld be to blame,
 Theirs be the charge, that speke so large
 In hurting of my name ;
 For I wyl prove that feythful love,
 It is devoyd of shame,
 In your distresse and heaviness,
 To parte wyth you the same ;
 And sure all thoo, that doo not so,
 Trewe lovers ar they noon ;
 But in my mynde, of all mankynde,
 I love but you alone.'

' I councel yow, remembre how
 It is noo mayden's lawe
 Nothing to dowte, but to renne out
 To wod with an outlawe :

Of yonge] By young. parte wyth] share with. thoo] those.
 dowte] fear.

For ye must there in your hande bere
A bowe redy to drawe,
And as a theef thus must ye lyve,
Ever in drede and awe ;
By whiche to yow gret harme myght grow,
Yet had I lever than
That I had too the grene wod goo,
Alone, a banysshed man.'

' I thinke not nay, but as ye saye,
It is noo maydens lore ;
But love may make me, for your sake,
As ye have said before,
To com on fote, to hunte and shote
To get us mete and store ;
For soo that I your company
May have, I aske noo more ;
From whiche to parte, it makith myn herte
As cold as ony ston ;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
I love but you alone.'

' For an outlawe this is the lawe,
That men hym take and binde
Wythout pytee, hanged to bee,
And waver with the wynde.
Yf I had neede, as god for-bede,
What rescous coude ye finde ?
For sothe I trowe, you and your bowe
Shul drawe for fere behynde ;
And noo merveyle, for lytel avayle
Were in your councel than ;
Wherfore I too the woode wyl goo,
Alone, a banysshed man.'

lever] rather.

than] then.

rescous] rescue, aid.

* Ful wel knowe ye, that wymen bee
 Ful febyl for to syght,
 Non womanhed is it indeude,
 To bee holde as a knyght :
 Yet in suchे fere ys that ye were,
 Amonge enemys day and nyght,
 I wolde wylttonde, with bowe in hande,
 To greve them as I myght,
 And you to save, as wymen have
 From death men many one ;
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
 I love but you alone.'

* Yet take good hede, for ever I drede,
 That ye coude not sustein
 The thorney wayes, the depe valeis,
 The snowe, the frost, the reyn,
 The colde, the heire ; for drye or wete,
 We must lode on the playn ;
 And, us above, no other rove
 But a brake bush, or twayne ;
 Whiche sone shulde greve you, I beleve,
 And ye wolde gladly than
 That I had too the grene wode goo,
 Alone, a banysshed man.'

* Syth I have here ben partynere
 With you of joy and blysse,
 I muste also parte of your woo
 Endure, as reason is ;
 Yet I am sure of oo pleasure,
 And shortly it is this,
 That where ye bee, me semeth, perde,
 I coude not fare a-mysse.

Without more speche, I you beseche,
That we were soon a-gone ;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
I love but you alone.'

' Yef ye goo thidyr, ye must consider,
Whan ye have lust to dyne,
Ther shall no mete be for to gete,
Nor drinke, bere, ale ne wine,
Ne shetis clene to lye betwene,
Made of thred and twyne ;
Noon other house, but levys and bowes
To kever your hed and myne :
Loo ! myn herte swete, this ylle dyet
Shuld make you pale and wan,
Wherefore I to the wood wyl goo,
Alone, a banysshid man.'

' Amonge the wylde dere suche an archier
As men say that ye bee,
Ne may not fayle of good vitayle,
Where is so grete plente ;
And watir cleere of the ryvere
Shalbe ful swete to me,
Wyth whiche in hele I shal right welc
Endure, as ye shal see ;
And, er we goo, a bed or twoo
I can provide anoon,
For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
I love but you alone.'

' Loo yet, before, ye must doo more,
Yf ye wyl goo with me,
As cutte your here up by your erc,
Your kirtel by the knee,

ne] nor.

hele] health.

Wyth bowe in hande for to withstonde
 Your enmys, yf nede be :
 And this same nyght, before day-lyght,
 To wood-ward wyl I flee ;
 And if ye wyl all this fulfylle,
 Doo it shortly as ye can,
 Ellis wil I to the grene wode goo,
 Alone, a banysshid man.'

' I shal as now do more for you
 Than longeth to womanhede,
 To short my here, a bowe to bere,
 To shote in time of nede.
 O my swete moder, before all other
 For you have I most drede ;
 But now, a-diew ; I must ensue
 Wher fortune doth me leede :
 All this make ye : now lete us fice,
 The day cumeth fast upon ;
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
 I love but you alone.'

' Nay, nay, not soo, ye shal not goo,
 And I shal telle you why ;
 Your appetyte is to be lyght
 Of love, I wele aspie ;
 For right as ye have sayd to me,
 In lyke wyse hardely
 Ye wolde answeare, who-so-ever it were,
 In way of company.
 It is sayd of olde, " Sone hote, sone colde,"
 And so is a woman ;
 Wherefore I too the woode wyl goo,
 Alone, a banysshid man.'

shortely] quickly. longeth] belongeth. All this make ye]
 You are the cause of all this. hardely] boldly.

‘ Yef ye take hede, yet is noo nedc
Such wordis to say bee me ;
For ofte ye preyd, and longe assayed,
Or I you lovid, perdec ;
And though that I, of auncestry
A barons daughter bee,
Yet have you proved how I you loved,
A squyer of low degree,
And ever shal, whatso befalle,
To dey therefore a-noon ;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
I love but you alone.’

‘ A barons childe to be begyled,
It were a curssed dede ;
To be felow with an out-lawe—
Almighty god for-bede !
Yet bettyr were the pore squyer
Alone to forest yede,
Than ye shal saye another day,
That be my wyked dede
Ye were betrayed ; wherfore, good maide,
The best rede that I can,
Is, that I too the grene-wode goo,
Alone, a banysshed man.’

‘ Whatso-ever be-falle, I never shal
Of this thing yow upbraid :
But yf ye goo and leve me soo,
Then have ye me betraied.
Remembre you wele how that ye dele
For yf ye, as ye sayde,
Be so unkynde, to leve behynde
Your love, the notbrowne maide,

bee me] regarding me. To dey] Were I to die. yede] went.

Trust me truly that I shal dey,
 Sone after ye be gone,
 For in my mynde, of all man-kynde
 I love but you alone.'

' Yef that ye went, ye shulde repent,
 For in the forest now
 I have purveid me of a maide,
 Whom I love more than you.
 Another fayrer than ever ye were,
 I dare it wel avowe ;
 And of you bothe, eche shuld be wrothe
 With other, as I trowe :
 It were mine ease to lyve in pease ;
 So wyl I, yf I can ;
 Wherfore I to the wode wyl goo,
 Alone, a banysshid man.'

' Though in the wood I undirstode
 Ye had a paramour,
 All this may nought remeve my thought,
 But that I will be your ;
 And she shal fynde me softe and kinde,
 And curteis every our,
 Glad to fulfylle all that she wylle
 Commaund me, to my power ;
 For had ye, loo ! an hondred moo,
 Yet wolde I be that one ;
 For, in my mynde, of all mankynde,
 I love but you alone.'

' Myn own dere love, I see the prove
 That ye be kynde and trewe ;
 Of maybe and wyf, in al my lyf,
 The best that ever I knewe.

moo] more. that one] one of them. prove] proof.

Be mery and glad, be no more sad,
The case is chaunged new ;
For it were ruthe, that for your trouth
You shuld have cause to rewre.
Be not dismayed ; what-soever I sayd
To you, whan I began,
I wyl not too the grene wod goo,
I am noo banysshyd man.'

' Theis tidingis be more glad to me,
Than to be made a quene,
Yf I were sure they shuld endure ;
But it is often seen,
When men wyl breke promyse, they speke
The wordis on the splene.
Ye shape some wyle me to begyle,
And stèle fro me, I wene ;
Then were the case wurs than it was
And I more woo begone ;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
I love but you alone.'

' Ye shal not nede further to drede ;
I will not disparage
You, god defende, sith ye descend
Of so grete a lynage :
Now understonde, to Westmorelond,
Which is my herytage,
I wyl you bringe, and wyth a ryngc,
Be wey of maryage
I wyl you take, and lady make,
As shortly as I can ;
Thus have ye wone an erles son,
And not a banysshyd man.'—

on the splene] in great haste.

defende] forbid.

Here may ye see that wymen be
 In love meke, kinde, and stable ;
 Late never man repreve them than,
 Or calle them variable ;
 But rather prey god that we may
 To them be confortable,
 Whieh somtyme provyth suche as he loveth,
 Yf they be charitable :
 For sith men wolde that wymen sholde
 Be meke to them eeheon,
 Moehe more ought they to god obey,
 And serve but him alone.

EDMUND SPENSER

1552-1599

The Cave of Morpheus

HE making speedy way through spersed ayre,
 And through the world of waters wide and deepe,
 To *Morpheus* house doth hastily repaire.
 Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
 And low, where dawning day doth neuer peepe,
 His dwelling is ; there *Tethys* his wet bed
 Doth euer wash, and *Cynthia* still doth steepe
 In siluer deaw his euer-drouping hed,
 Whiles sad Night ouer him her mantle black doth spred.
 Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,
 The one faire fram'd of burnisht Yuory,
 The other all with siluer ouercast ;
 And wakefull dogges before them farre do lye,
 Watching to banish Care their enimy,
 Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.
 By them the Sprite doth passe in quietly,
 And vnto *Morpheus* comes, whom drowned deepe
 In drowsie fit he findes : of nothing he takes keepe.
 spersed] dispersed.

And more, to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streme from high rocke tumbling downe
And ever-drizling raine vpon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring wind, much like the sowne
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a sowne
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard: but carclesse Quiet lyes,
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enemyes.

The Cave of Despair

SO as they traucild, lo they gan espy
An armed knight towards them gallop fast,
That seemed from some feared foe to fly,
Or other griesly thing, that him agast.
Still as he fled, his eye was backward cast,
As if his feare still followed him behind;
Als flew his steed, as he his bands had brast,
And with his winged heeles did tread the wind,
As he had beene a fole of *Pegasus* his kind.

Nigh as he drew, they might perceiue his head
To be vnarm'd, and curld vncombed heares
Vpstaring stiffe, dismayd with vncouth dread,
Nor drop of bloud in all his face appeares
Nor life in limbe: and to increase his feares,
In fowle reproch of knighthoods faire degrec,
About his neck an hempen rope he weares,
That with his glistring armes does ill agree;
But he of rope or armes has now no memorie.

The *Redcrosse* knight toward him crossed fast,
To weet, what mister wight was so dismayd:
There him he finds all sencelesse and aghast,
That of him selfe he seemed to be afayd;
agast] terrified. what mister wight] what manner of man.

Whom hardly he from flying forward stayd,
 Till he these wordes to him deliuier might ;
 Sir knight, aread who hath ye thus arayd,
 And eke from whom make ye this hasty flight :
 For nener knight I saw in such misseeming plight.

He answerd nought at all, bnt adding new
 Feare to his first amazment, staring wide
 With stony eyes, and hartlesse hollow hew,
 Astonisht stood, as one that had aspide
 Infernall furies, with their chaines vntide.
 Him yet againe, and yet againe bespake
 The gentle knight ; who nought to him replide,
 But trembling euery ioynt did inly quake,
 And foltring tongue at last these words seemd forth to
 shake.

For Gods deare loue, Sir knight, do me not stay ;
 For loe he comes, he comes fast after mee.
 Eft looking backe would faine haue runne away ;
 But he him forst to stay, and tellen free
 The secret cause of his perplexitie :
 Yet nathemore by his bold hartie speach,
 Could his bloud-froſen hart emboldned bee,
 But through his boldnesse rather feare did reach,
 Yet forſt, at last he made through silence suddein breach.

And am I now in safetie sure (quoth he)
 From him, that would haue forced me to dye ?
 And is the point of death now turnd fro mee,
 That I may tell this haplesse history ?
 Feare nought : (quoth he) no daunger now is nye.
 Then shall I you recount a ruefull cace,
 (Said he) the which with this vnlucky eye
 I late beheld, and had not greater grace
 Me ref from it, had bene partaker of the place.

aread] explain.

arrayd] afflicted.

Eſt] Afterwards.

I lately chaunst (Would I had neuer chaunst)
 With a faire knight to keepen compance,
 Sir *Terwin* hight, that well himselfe aduaunst
 In all affaires, and was both bold and free,
 But not so happie as mote happie bee :
 He lou'd, as was his lot, a Ladie gent,
 That him againe lou'd in the least degree :
 For she was proud, and of too high intent,
 And ioyd to see her louer languish and lament.

From whom returning sad and comfortlesse,
 As on the way together we did fare,
 We met that villen (God from him me blesse)
 That cursed wight, from whom I scapt whylcare,
 A man of hell, that cals himselfe *Despaire* :
 Who first vs greets, and after faire arcedes
 Of tydings strange, and of aduentures rare :
 So creeping close, as Snake in hidden weedes,
 Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly deedes.

Which when he knew, and felt our feeble harts
 Embost with bale, and bitter byting grieve,
 Which loue had launched with his deadly darts,
 With wounding words and termes of foule repriefe
 He pluckt from vs all hope of due reliefe,
 That earst vs held in loue of lingring life ;
 Then hopelesse hartlesse, gan the cunning thiefe
 Perswade vs die, to stint all further strife :
 To me he lent this rope, to him a rustie knife.

With which sad instrument of hastie death,
 That wofull louer, loathing lenger light,
 A wide way made to let forth liuing breath.
 But I more fearefull, or more luckie wight,
 Dismayd with that deformed dismal sight,
 gent] gentle. Embost] Exhausted. launched] lanced.
 repriefe] reproof.

Fled fast away, halfe dead with dying feare :
 Ne yet assur'd of life by you, Sir knight,
 Whose like infirmite like chaunce may beare :
 But God you neuer let his charmed speeches heare.

How may a man (said he) with idle speach
 Be wonne, to spoyle the Castle of his health ?
 I wote (quoth he) whom triall late did teach,
 That like would not for all this worldes wealth :
 His subtil tongue, like dropping honny, mealt' th
 Into the hart, and searcheth euery vaine,
 That ere one be aware, by secret stealth
 His powre is reft, and weaknesse doth remaine.
 O neuer Sir desire to try his guilefull traine.

Certes (said he) hence shall I neuer rest,
 Till I that treachours art haue heard and tride ;
 And you Sir knight, whose name mote I request,
 Of grace do me vnto his cabin guide.
 I that hight *Treuisan* (quoth he) will ride
 Against my liking backe, to doe you grace :
 But nor for gold nor glee will I abide
 By you, when ye arriue in that same place ;
 For leuer had I die, then see his deadly face.

Ere long they come, where that same wicked wight
 His dwelling has, low in an hollow caue,
 Farre underneath a craggie clift yplight,
 Darke, dolefull, drearie, like a greedie graue,
 That still for carrion carcases doth craue :
 On top whereof aye dwelt the ghastly Owle,
 Shrieking his balefull note, which euer draue
 Farre from that haunt all other chearefull fowle ;
 And all about it wandring ghostes did waile and howle.

ypight} pitched.

And all about old stockes and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit, nor leafe was euer seene,
Did hang vpon the ragged rocky knees ;
On which had many wretches hanged beene,
Whose carcases were scattered on the greene,
And throwne about the clifs. Arriued there,
That bare-head knight for dread and dolefull teene,
Would faine haue fled, ne durst approchen neare,
But th'other forst him stay, and comforted in feare.

That darkesome caue they enter, where they find
That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullein mind ;
His griesie lockes, long growen, and vnbound,
Disordred hong about his shoulders round,
And hid his face ; through which his hollow cyne
Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astound ;
His raw-bone cheeke through penurie and pine,
Were shronke into his iawes, as he did neuer dine.

His garment nought but many ragged clouts,
With thornes together pind and patched was,
The which his naked sides he wrapt abouts ;
And him beside there lay vpon the gras
A drearie corsc, whose life away did pas,
All wallowd in his owne yet luke-warme blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh alas ;
In which a rustie knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing flood.

Which piteous spectacle, approuing trew
The wofull tale that *Treuisan* had told,
When as the gentle *Rederrosse* knight did vew,
With frie zeale he burnt in courage bold,
Him to auenge, before his bloud were cold,

teene] grief.

griesie] grizzled.

And to the villein said, Thou damned wight,
 The author of this fact, we here behold,
 What iustice can but iudge against thee right,
 With thine owne bloud to price his bloud, here shed in
 sight?

What frantick fit (quoth he) hath thus distraught
 Thee, foolish man, so rash a doome to giue?
 What iustice euer other iudgement taught,
 But he should die, who merites not to liue?
 None else to death this man desparyring drue,
 But his owne guiltie mind deseruing death.
 Is then vniust to each his due to giue?
 Or let him die, that loatheth liuing breath?
 Or let him die at ease, that liueth here vncath?

Who trauels by the wearie wandring way,
 To come vnto his wished home in haste,
 And meetes a flood, that doth his passage stay,
 Is not great grace to helpe him ouer past,
 Or free his feet, that in the myre sticke fast?
 Most envious man, that grieues at neighbours good.
 And fond, that ioyest in the woe thou hast,
 Why wilt not let him passe, that long hath stood
 Vpon the banke, yet wilt thy selfe not passe the flood?

He there does now enjoy eternall rest
 And happie ease, which thou doest want and craue,
 And further from it daily wanderest:
 What if some litle paine the passage haue,
 That makes fraile flesh to feare the bitter wawe?
 Is not short paine well borne, that brings long ease,
 And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet graue?
 Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
 Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please.

vncath] uneasy.

The knight much wondred at his suddeine wit,
And said, The terme of life is limited,
Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten it ;
The souldier may not moue from watchfull sted,
Nor leauc his stand, vntill his Captaine bed.
Who life did limit by almighty doome,
(Quoth he) knowes best the termes established ;
And he, that points the Centonell his roome,
Doth license him depart at sound of morning droome.

Is not his deed, what euer thing is donne,
In heauen and earth ? did not he all create
To die againe ? all ends that was begonne.
Their times in his eternall booke of fate .
Are written sure, and haue their certaine date.
Who then can striue with strong necessitie,
That holds the world in his still chaunging state,
Or shunne the death ordayne by destinie ?
When houre of death is come, let none aske whence, nor
why.

The lenger life, I wote the greater sin,
The greater sin, the greater punishment :
All those great battels, which thou boasts to win,
Through strife, and bloud-shed, and auengement,
Now praysed, hereafter deare thou shalt repent :
For life must life, and bloud must bloud repay.
Is not enough thy euill life forespent ?
For he, that once hath missed the right way,
The further he doth goe, the further he doth stray.

Then do no further goe, no further stray,
But here lie downe, and to thy rest betake,
Th'ill to preuent, that life ensewen may.
For what hath life, that may it loued make,
And giues not rather cause it to forsake ?

sted] station.

points] appoints.

Feare, sicknesse, age, losse, labour, sorrow, strife,
 Paine, hunger, cold, that makes the hart to quake ;
 And euer fickle fortune rageth rife,
 All which, and thousands mo do make a loathsome lise.

Thou wretched man, of death hast greatest need,
 If in true ballance thou wilt weigh thy state :
 For neuer knight, that darel warlike deede,
 More lucklesse disauentures did amate :
 Witnesse the dongeon deepe, wherein of late
 Thy life shut vp, for death so oft did call ;
 And though good lucke prolonged hath thy date,
 Yet death then, would the like mishaps forestall,
 Into the which hereafter thou maiest happen fall.

Why then doest thou, O man of sin, desire
 To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree ?
 Is not the measure of thy sinfull hirre
 High heaped vp with huge iniquitie,
 Against the day of wrath, to burden thee ?
 Is not enough, that to this Ladie milde
 Thou falsed hast thy faith with perjurie,
 And sold thy selfe to serue *Duessa* vilde,
 With whom in all abuse thou hast thy selfe defilde ?

Is not he iust, that all this doth behold
 From highest heauen, and beares an equall eye ?
 Shall he thy sins vp in his knowledge fold,
 And guiltie be of thine impietie ?
 Is not his law, Let euery sinner die :
 Die shall all flesh ? what then must needs be donne,
 Is it not better to doe willinglie,
 Then linger, till the glasse be all out ronne ?
 Death is the end of woes : die soone, O faeries sonne.

amate] daunt.

vilde] vile.

The knight was much enmoued with his speach,
That as a swords point through his hart did perse,
And in his conscience made a secret breach,
Well knowing true all, that he did reherse
And to his fresh remembrance did reuerse
The vgly vew of his deformed crimes,
That all his manly powres it did disperse,
As he were charmed with inchaunted rimes,
That oftentimes he quakt, and fainted oftentimes.

In which amazement, when the Miscreant
Perceiued him to wauer weake and fraile,
Whiles trembling horror did his conscience dant,
And hellish anguish did his soule assaile,
To drive him to despaire, and quite to quailc,
He shew'd him painted in a table plaine,
The damned ghosts, that doe in torments waile,
And thousand feends that doe them endlesse paine
With fire and brimstone, which for euer shall remaine.

The sight whereof so throughly him dismayd,
That nought but death before his eyes he saw,
And euer burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th' Almightyes law :
Then gan the villein him to ouercraw,
And brought vnto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw ;
And bad him choose, what death he would desire :
For death was due to him, that had prouokt Gods ire.

But when as none of them he saw him take,
He to him raught a dagger sharpe and keene,
And gaue it him in hand : his hand did quake,
And tremble like a leafe of Aspin greene,
And troubled bloud through his pale face was seen
throughly] thoroughly. ouercraw] exult over.
raught] reached.

To come, and goe with tydings from the hart,
 As it a running messenger had beene.
 At last resolu'd to worke his finall smart,
 He lifted vp his hand, that backe againe did start.

Which when as *Vna* saw, through euery vaine
 The crudled cold ran to her well of life,
 As in a swowne : but soone reliu'd againe,
 Out of his hand she snatcht the cursed knife,
 And threw it to the ground, enraged rife,
 And to him said, Fie, fie, faint harted knight,
 What meanest thou by this reprochfull strife ?
 Is this the battell, which thou vauntst to fight
 With that fire-mouthed Dragon, horrible and bright ?

Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight,
 Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly hart,
 Ne diuelish thoughts dismay thy constant spright.
 In heauenly mercies hast thou not a part ?
 Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art ?
 Where iustice growes, there grows eke greater grace,
 The which doth quench the brond of hellish smart,
 And that accurst hand-writing doth deface.
 Arise, Sir knight arise, and leauue this cursed place.

So vp he rose, and thence amounted streight.
 Which when the carle beheld, and saw his guest
 Would safe depart, for all his subtil sleight,
 He chose an halter from among the rest,
 And with it hung himselfe, vnbid vnblest.
 But death he could not worke himselfe thereby ;
 For thousand times he so himselfe had drest,
 Yet nathelesse it could not doe him die,
 Till he should die his last, that is eternally.

crudled] curdled.

carle] churl.

vnbid] not prayed for.

The Bower of Bliss

EFTEOONES they heard a most melodious sound,
Of all that mote delight a daintie eare,
Such as attonce might not on liuing ground,
Sauē in this Paradise, be heard elsewhere :
Right hard it was, for wight, which did it heare,
To read, what manner musicke that mote bee :
For all that pleasing is to liuing eare,
Was there consorted in one harinonee,
Birdes, voyces, instruments, windes, waters, all agree.

The ioyous birdes shrouded in chearefull shade,
Their notes vnto the voyce attempred sweet ;
Th' Angelicall soft trembling voyces made
To th' instruments diuine respontence meet :
The siluer sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmure of the waters fall :
The waters fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, vnto the wind did call :
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.

The whiles some one did chaunt this louely lay ;
Ah see, who so faire thing doest faine to see,
In springing flowre the image of thy day ;
Ah see the Virgin Rose, how sweetly shee
Doth first peepe forth with bashfull modestee,
That fairer seemes, the lesse ye see her may ;
Lo see soone after, how more bold and free
Her bared bosome she doth broad display ;
Loe see soone after, how she fades, and falles away.

So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortall life the leafe, the bud, the flowre,
Ne more doth flourish after first decay,
That earst was sought to decke both bed and bowre,
Of many a Ladie, and many a Paramowre :

Gather therefore the Rose, whilst yet is prime,
 For soone comes age, that will her pride deflowre :
 Gather the Rose of loue, whilst yet is time,
 Whilst louing thou mayst loued be with equall crime.

The Pageant of the Months and Seasons

SO, forth issew'd the Seasons of the yeare ;
 First, lusty *Spring*, all dight in leaues of flowres
 That freshly budded and new bloosmes did beare
 (In which a thousand birds had built their bowres
 That sweetly sung, to call forth Paramours) :
 And in his hand a iuelin he did beare,
 And on his head (as fit for warlike stoures)
 A guilt engrauen morion he did weare ;
 That as some did him loue, so others did him feare.

Then came the iolly *Sommier*, being dight
 In a thin silken cassock coloured greene,
 That was vnyned all, to be more light :
 And on his head a girlond well beseene
 He wore, from which as he had chauffed been
 The sweat did drop ; and in his hand he bore
 A boawe and shaftes, as he in forrest greene
 Had hunted late the Libbard or the Bore,
 And now would bathe his limbes, with labor heated sore.

Then came the *Autumne* all in yellow clad,
 As though he oyed in his plentious store,
 Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad
 That he had banisht hunger, which to-fore
 Had by the belly oft him pinched sore.
 Vpon his head a wreath that was enrold
 With eares of corne, of every sort he bore :
 And in his hand a sickle he did holde,
 To reap the ripened fruits the which the earth had yold.

stoures] conflicts. chauffed] heated. Libbard] leopard.
 yold] yielded.

Lastly, came *Winter* cloathed all in frize,
 Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill,
 Whil'st on his hoary beard his breath did freese ;
 And the dull drops that from his purpled bill
 As from a limbeck did adown distill.
 In his right hand a tipped staffe he held,
 With which his feeble steps he stayed still :
 For, he was faint with cold, and weak with cld ;
 That scarce his loosed limbis he hable was to weld.

These, marching softly, thus in order went,
 And after them, the Monthes all riding came ;
 First, sturdy *March* with brows full sternly bent,
 And armed strongly, rode vpon a Ram,
 The same which ouer *Hellespontus* swam :
 Yet in his hand a spade he also hent,
 And in a bag all sorts of seeds ysame,
 Which on the earth he strowed as he went,
 And fild her womb with fruitfull hope of nourishment.

Next came fresh *Aprill* full of lustyhed,
 And wanton as a Kid whose horne new buds :
 Vpon a Bull he rode, the same which led
Europa floting through th'*Argolick* fluds :
 His hornes were gilden all with golden studs
 And garnished with garlonds goodly dight
 Of all the fairest flowres and freshest buds
 Which th' earth brings forth, and wet he seem'd in sight
 With waues, through which he waded for his loues delight.

Then came faire *May*, the fayrest mayd on ground,
 Deckt all with dainties of her seasons pryd,
 And throwing flowres out of her lap around :
 Vpon two brethrens shoulders she did ride,
 The twinnes of *Leda* ; which on eyther side

limbeck] alembic, still.

ysame] together.

Supported her like to their soueraine Queene.
Lord ! how all creatures laught, when her they spide,
And leapt and daunc't as they had rauisht beeone !
And *Cupid* selfe about her fluttred all in greene.

And after her, came iolly *June*, arrayd
All in greene leaues, as he a Player were ;
Yet in his time, he wrought as well as playd,
That by his plough-yrons mote right well appeare :
Vpon a Crab he rode, that him did beare
With crooked crawling steps an vncouth pase,
And backward yode, as Bargemen wont to fare
Bending their force contrary to their face,
Like that vngracious crew which faines demurest grace.

Then came hot *July* boyling like to fire,
That all his garments he had cast away :
Vpon a Lyon raging yet with ire
He boldly rode and made him to obey :
It was the beast that whylome did forray
The Nemæan forrest, till th' *Amphytrionide*
Him slew, and with his hide did him array ;
Behinde his back a sithe, and by his side
Vnder his belt he bore a sickle circling wide.

The sixt was *August*, being rich arrayd
In garment all of gold downe to the ground :
Yet rode he not, but led a louely Mayd
Forth by the lilly hand, the which was cround
With eares of corne, and full her hand was found ;
That was the righteous Virgin, which of old
Liv'd here on earth, and plenty made abound ;
But, after Wrong was lov'd and Iustice solde,
She left th' vnrighteous world and was to heauen extold.

Next him, *September* marched eeke on foote ;
Yet was he heauy laden with the spoyle
Of haruests riches, which he made his boot,
And him enricht with bounty of the soyle :
yode] went. *forray] raid.* *boot] booty.*

In his one hand, as fit for haruests toyle,
 He held a knife-hook ; and in th' other hand
 A paire of waights, with which he did assoyle
 Both more and lesse, where it in doubt did stand,
 And equall gaue to each as Iustice duly scann'd.

Then came *October* full of merry glee :
 For, yet his noule was totty of the must,
 Which he was treading in the wine-fats see,
 And of the ioyous oyle, whose gentle gust
 Made him so frolick and so full of lust :
 Vpon a dreadfull Scorpion he did ride,
 The same which by *Dianas* doom vniust
 Slew great *Orion* : and eeke by his side
 He had his ploughing share, and coulter ready tyde.

Next was *Nouember*, he full grosse and fat,
 As fed with lard, and that right well might seeme ;
 For, he had been a fatting hogs of late,
 That yet his browes with sweat, did reek and steem,
 And yet the season was full sharp and breem ;
 In planting eeke he took no small delight :
 Whereon he rode, not easie was to deeme ;
 For it a dreadfull *Centaure* was in sight,
 The seed of *Saturne*, and faire *Nais*, *Chiron* hight.

And after him, came next the chill *December* :
 Yet he through merry feasting which he made,
 And great bonfires, did not the cold remember ;
 His Sauiours birth his mind so much did glad :
 Vpon a shaggy-bearded Goat he rode,
 The same wherewith *Dan Ione* in tender yeares,
 They say, was nourisht by th' *Idæan* mayd ;
 And in his hand a broad deepe boawle he beares ;
 Of which, he freely drinks an health to all his peers.

assoyle] determine.
breem] cold.

noule] head.

totty] giddy.

Then came old *January*, wrapped well
 In many weeds to keep the cold away ;
 Yet did he quake and quiver like to quell,
 And blowe his nayles to warme them if he may :
 For, they were numb'd with holding all the day
 An hatchet keene, with which he felled wood,
 And from the trees did lop the needlesse spray :
 Vpon an huge great Earth-pot steane he stood ;
 From whose wide mouth, there flowed forth the Romane
 floud.

And lastly, came cold *February*, sitting
 In an old wagon, for he could not ride ;
 Drawne of two fishes for the season fitting,
 Which through the flood before did softly slyde
 And swim away : yet had he by his side
 His plough and harnesse fit to till the ground,
 And tooles to prune the trees, before the pride
 Of hasting Prime did make them burgein round :
 So past the twelue Months forth, and their dew places
 found.

BEN JONSON

1573(?)–1637

*To the memory of my beloved, the author Mr.
 William Shakespeare : and what he hath left us*

[Prefixed to the First Shakespeare Folio, 1623]

TO draw no enuy (*Shakespeare*) on thy name,
 Am I thus ample to thy Booke, and Fame :
 While I confesse thy writings to be such,
 As neither *Man*, nor *Muse*, can praise too much.
 'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these wayes
 Were not the paths I meant vnto thy praise :

quell] perish.

steane] stone (jar).

For secliest Ignorance on these may light,
 Which, when it sounds at best, but eccho's right ;
 Or blinde Affection, which doth ne're aduance
 The truth, but gropes, and vrgeth all by chance ;
 Or crafty Malice, might pretend this praise,
 And thinke to ruine, where it seem'd to raise.
 But thou art proofe against them, and indeed,
 Aboue th' ill fortune of them, or the need.
 I, therefore will begin. Soule of the Age !
 The applause ! delight ! the wonder of our Stage !
 My *Shakespeare*, rise ; I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or *Spenser*, or bid *Beaumont* lye
 A little further, to make thee a roome :
 Thou art a Moniment, without a tombe,
 And art aliue still, while thy Booke doth liue,
 And we haue wits to read, and praise to giue.
 That I not mixe thee so, my braine excuses ;
 I meane with great, but disproportion'd *Muses* :
 For, if I thought my iudgement were of yeres,
 I should commit thee surely with thy peeres,
 And tell, how farre thou didst our *Lily* out-shine,
 Or sporting *Kid*, or *Marlowes* mighty line.
 And though thou hadst small *Latine*, and lesse *Greece*,
 From thence to honour thec, I would not seeke
 For names ; but call forth thund'ring *Æschilus*,
Euripides, and *Sophocles* to vs,
Paccinius, *Accius*, him of *Cordoua* dead,
 To life againe, to heare thy Buskin tread,
 And shake a Stage : Or, when thy Sockes were on,
 Leave thee alone, for the comparison
 Of all, that insolent *Greece*, or haughtie *Rome*
 Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
 Triumph, my *Britaine*, thou hast one to showe,
 To whom all Scenes of *Europe* homage owe.
 He was not of an age, but for all time !
 And all the *Muses* still were in their prime,
 him of *Cordoua*] *Seneca*.

When like *Apollo* he came forth to warme
 Our cares, or like a *Mercury* to charme !
 Nature her selfe was proud of his designes,
 And ioy'd to weare the dressing of his lines !
 Which were so richly spnn, and wouen so fit,
 As, since, she will vouchsafe no other Wit.
 The merry *Greeke*, tart *Aristophanes*,
 Neat *Terence*, witty *Plautus*, now not please ;
 But antiquated, and deserted lyce
 As they were not of Natures family.
 Yet must I not giue Nature all : Thy Art,
 My gentle *Shakespeare*, must enjoy a part.
 For though the *Poets* matter, Nature be,
 His Art doth giue the fashion. And, that he,
 Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
 (Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
 Vpon the *Muses* anuile : turne the same,
 (And himselfe with it) that he thinkes to frame ;
 Or for the lawrell, he may gaine a scorne,
 For a good *Poet's* made, as well as borne.
 And such wert thou. Looke how the fathers face
 Lives in his issue, eu'en so, the race
 Of *Shakespeares* minde, and manners brightly shincs
 In his well torned, and true filed lines :
 In each of which, he seemes to shake a Lance,
 As brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance.
 Sweet Swan of *Auon* ! what a sight it were
 To see thee in our waters yet appeare,
 And make those flights upon the bankes of *Thames*
 That so did take *Eliza*, and our *James* !
 But stay, I see thee in the *Hemisphere*
 Aduanc'd, and made a Constellation there !
 Shine forth, thou Starre of *Poets*, and with rage,
 Or influence, chide, or cheere the drooping Stage ;
 Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like
 night,
 And despaires day, but for thy Volumes light.

JOHN MILTON

1608-1674

*An Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet,
W. Shakespeare*

[Prefixed to the Second Shakespeare Folio, 1632]

WHAT needs my Shakespear for his honour'd Bones,
 The labour of an age in piled Stones,
 Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
 Under a Star-ypointing *Pyramid*?
 Dear son of memory, great heir of Fame,
 What need'st thou such weak witnes of thy name?
 Thou in our wonder and astonishment
 Hast built thy self a live-long Monument.
 For whilst to th' shame of slow-endeavouring art,
 Thy easie numbers flow, and that each heart
 Hath from the leaves of thy unvalu'd Book,
 Those Delphick lines with deep impression took,
 Then thou our fancy of it self bereaving,
 Dost make us Marble with too much conceaving:
 And so Sepulcher'd in such pomp dost lie,
 That Kings for such a Tomb would wish to die.

On his dead Wife

METHOUGHT I saw my late espoused Saint
 Brought to me like *Alcestis* from the grave,
 Whom *Joves* great Son to her glad Husband gave,
 Rescu'd from death by force though pale and faint.
 Mine as whom washt from spot of child-bed taint,
 Purification in the old Law did save,
 And such, as yet once more I trust to have
 Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
 Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
 Her face was vail'd, yet to my fancied sight,
 Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd
 So clear, as in no face with more delight.
 But O as to embrace me she enclin'd
 I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.

Invocation to Light

HAIL holy light, offspring of Heav'n first-born,
 Or of th' Eternal Coeternal beam
 May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light,
 And never but in unapproached light
 Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,
 Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
 Or hear'st thou rather p're Ethereal stream,
 Whose Fountaine who shall tell? before the Sun,
 Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice
 Of God, as with a Mantle didst invest
 The rising world of waters dark and deep,
 Won from the void and formless infinite.
 Thee I re-visit now with bolder wing,
 Escap't the Stygian Pool, though long detain'd
 In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight
 Through utter and through middle darkness borne
 With other notes then to th' Orphean Lyre
 I sung of Chaos and Eternal Night,
 Tanght by the heav'nly Muse to ventnre down
 The dark descent, and up to reascend,
 Though hard and rare: thee I revisit safe,
 And feel thy sovran vital Lamp; but thou
 Revisit'st not these eyes, that rowle in vain
 To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
 So thick a drop serene hath quencht thir Orbs,
 Or dim suffusion veild. Yet not the more
 Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
 Cleer Spring, or shadie Grove, or Sunnie Hill,
 Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
 Thee Sion and the flowrie Brooks beneath
 That wash thy hallowd feet, and warbling flow,
 Nightly I visit: nor somtimes forget
 Those other two equal'd with me in Fate,
 So were I equal'd with them in renown,

Blind *Thamyris* and blind *Mæonides*,
And *Tiresias* and *Phineus* Prophets old.
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntarie move
Harmonious numbers ; as the wakeful Bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest Covert hid
Tunes her nocturnal Note. Thus with the Year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summers Rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ;
But cloud in stead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the chearful waies of men
Cut off, and for the Book of knowledg fair
Presented with a Universal blanc
Of Natures works to mee expung'd and ras'd,
And wisdome at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou Celestial light
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Samson's Blindness

BUT chief of all,
BO loss of sight, of thee I most complain !
Blind among enemies, O worse then chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age !
Light the prime work of God to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annall'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm ; the vilest here excel me,
They ereep, yet see, I dark in light expos'd
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own ;

Scarce half I seem to live, dead more then half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse
Without all hope of day !
O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be light, and light was over all ;
Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree ?
The Sun to me is dark
And silent as the Moon,
When she deserts the night
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the Soul,
She all in every part ; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd ?
So obvious and so easie to be quench't,
And not as feeling through all parts diffus'd,
That she might look at will through every pore ?
Then had I not been thus exil'd from light ;
As in the land of darkness yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried ; but O yet more miserable !
My self, my Sepulcher, a moving Grave,
Buried, yet not exempt
By priviledge of death and burial
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes.

[In 1679, while England was still mad over the Popish Plot, the Earl of Shaftesbury promoted a Bill to exclude the Duke of York from the succession as a Papist, and began to advocate the claim of the Duke of Monmouth, Charles II's illegitimate son. At the King's instigation Dryden wrote *Absalom and Achitophel*, figuring Charles II as David, Monmouth as Absalom, Shaftesbury as Achitophel, and the Duke of Buckingham as Zimri. Two poetasters, Shadwell and Settle, who drew their pens on Shaftesbury's side, were sacrificed in a second part as Og and Doeg.]

(1) *Achitophel*

O F these the false *Achitophel* was first,
 A Name to all succeeding Ages curst.
 For close Designs and crooked Counsels fit,
 Sagacious, Bold, and Turbulent of wit,
 Restless, unfixt in Principles and Place,
 In Pow'r displeased, impatient of Disgrace ;
 A fiery Soul, which working out its way,
 Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay :
 And o'er informed the Tenement of Clay.
 A daring Pilot in extremity ;
 Pleas'd with the Danger, when the Waves went high
 He sought the Storms ; but, for a Calm unfit,
 Would Steer too nigh the Sands to boast his Wit.
 Great Wits are sure to Madness near alli'd
 And thin Partitions do their Bounds divide ;
 Else, why should he, with Wealth and Honour blest,
 Refuse his Age the needful hours of Rest ?
 Punish a Body which he could not please,
 Bankrupt of Life, yet Prodigal of Ease ?
 And all to leave what with his Toil he won
 To that unfeather'd two-legg'd thing, a Son :
 Got, while his Soul did huddled Notions trie ;
 And born a shapeless Lump, like Anarchy.
 In Friendship false, implacable in Hate,

Resolv'd to Ruine or to Rule the State ;
 To Compass this the Triple Bond he broke ;
 The Pillars of the Publick Safety shook,
 And fitted *Israel* for a Foreign Yoke ;
 Then, seiz'd with Fear, yet still affecting Fame,
 Usurp'd a Patriot's All-attoning Name.
 So easie still it proves in Factious Times
 With publick Zeal to cancel private Crimes :
 How safe is Treason and how sacred ill,
 Where none can sin against the Peoples Will,
 Where Crouds can wink ; and no offence be known,
 Since in another's guilt they find their own.
 Yet, Fame deserv'd, no Enemy can grudge ;
 The Statesman we abhor, but praise the Judge.
 In *Israels* courts ne'er sat an *Abbethdin*
 With more discerning Eyes or Hands more clean,
 Unbrib'd, unsought, the Wretched to redress ;
 Swift of Dispatch and easie of Access.
 Oh, had he been content to serve the Crown
 With Vertues onely proper to the Gown,
 Or had the rankness of the Soil been freed
 From Cockle that opprest the Noble Seed,
 David for him his tuneful Harp had strung,
 And Heav'n had wanted one Immortal Song.

(2) *Zimri*:

SOME of their Chiefs were Princes of the Land ;
 In the first Rank of these did *Zimri* stand :
 A man so various, that he seem'd to be
 Not one, but all Mankind's Epitome.
 Stiff in Opinions, always in the wrong ;
 Was Every thing by starts, and Nothing long :
 But, in the course of one revolving Moon,
 Was Chymist, Fidler, States-man, and Buffoon ;

Triple Bond] an allusion to the Triple Alliance.
Abbethdin] Chief Justice

Then all for Women, Painting, Rhiming, Drinking,
 Besides ten thousand Freaks that died in thinking.
 Blest Madman, who cou'd every hour employ,
 With something New to wish, or to enjoy !
 Railing and praising were his usual Theams ;
 And both (to shew his Judgment) in Extreams :
 So over Violent, or over Civil,
 That every Man, with him, was God or Devil.
 In squandring Wealth was his peculiar Art :
 Nothing went unrewarded, but Desert.
 Begger'd by fools, whom still he found too late :
 He had his Jest, and they had his Estate.
 He laugh'd himself from Court ; then sought Relief
 By forming Parties, but could ne'r be Chief :
 For, spight of him, the weight of Business fell
 On *Absalom* and wise *Achitophel* :
 Thus wicked but in Will, of Means bereft,
 He left not Faction, but of that was left.

(3) *Doeg*

SOME in my Speedy pace I must outrun,
 As lame *Mephibosheth* the Wizard's Son ;
 To make quick way I'll Leap o'er heavy blocks,
 Shun rotten *Uzza* as I woud the Pox ;
 And hasten *Og* and *Doeg* to rehearse,
 Two Fools that Crutch their Feeble sense on Verse,
 Who by my Muse, to all succeeding times
 Shall live in spight of their own Dogrell Rhimes.

Doeg, though without knowing how or why,
 Made still a blund'ring kind of Melody ;
 Spurd boldly on, and Dash'd through Thick and Thin,
 Through Sense and Non-sense, never out nor in ;
 Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
 And in one word, Heroically mad,
 He was too warm on Picking-work to dwell,
 But Faggotted his Notions as they fell,

And, if they Rhim'd and Rat'l'd, all was well.
 Spightfull he is not, though he wrote a Satyr,
 For still there goes some thinking to ill-Nature :
 He needs no more than Birds and Beasts to think,
 All his occasions are to eat and drink.
 If he call Rogue and Rascal from a Garrat,
 He means you no more Mischief than a Parat :
 The words for Friend and Foe alike were made,
 To Fetter 'em in Verse is all his Trade.
 Let him be Gallows-Free by my consent,
 And nothing suffer, since he nothing meant :
 Hanging Supposes humane Soul and reason,
 This Animal's below committing Treason.
 Shall he be hang'd who never cou'd Rebell ?
 That's a preferment for Achitophel.
 Railing in other Men may be a crime,
 But ought to pass for mere instinct in him ;
 Instinct he follows and no farther knows,
 For to write Verse with him is to Transpose.
 'Twere pity treason at his Door to lay
 Who makes Heaven's gate a Lock to its own Key :
 Let him rayl on, let his invective muse
 Have four and Twenty letters to abuse,
 Which if he Jumbles to one line of Sense,
 Indict him of a Capital Offence.
 In Fire-works give him leave to vent his spight,
 Those are the only Serpents he can write ;
 The height of his ambition is we know
 But to be Master of a Puppet-show ;
 On that one Stage his works may yet appear,
 And a months Harvest keeps him all the Year.

Who makes, &c.] Settle's poem, *Achitophel Transposed*, began :
 'In gloomy times, when priestcraft bore the sway,
 And made Heaven's gate a lock to their own key.'

(4) Og

NOW stop your noses, Readers, all and some,
 For here's a tun of Midnight work to come,
 Og from a Treason Tavern rowling home.
 Round as a Globe, and Liquored ev'ry chink,
 Goodly and Great he Sayls behind his Link ;
 With all this Bulk there's nothing lost in Og,
 For ev'ry inch that is not Fool is Rogue :
 A Monstrous mass of foul corrupted matter,
 As all the Devils had spew'd to make the batter.
 When wine has given him courage to Blaspheme,
 He curses God, but God before Curst him ;
 And if man cou'd have reason, none has more,
 That made his Paunch so rich and him so poor.
 With wealth he was not trusted, for Heav'n knew
 What 'twas of Old to pamper up a Jew ;
 To what would he on Quail and Pheasant swell,
 That ev'n on Tripe and Carrion cou'd rebell ?
 But though Heaven made him poor, (with rev'rence
 speaking,) He never was a Poet of God's making ;
 The Midwife laid her hand on his Thick Skull,
 With this Prophetick blessing—*Be thou Dull* ;
 Drink, Swear, and Roar, forbear no lew'd delight
 Fit for thy Bulk, doe anything but write.
 Thou art of lasting Make, like thoughtless men,
 A strong Nativity—but for the Pen ;
 Eat Opium, mingle Arsenick in thy Drink,
 Still thou mayst live, avoiding Pen and Ink.
 I see, I see, 'tis Counsell given in vain,
 For Treason botcht in Rhime will be thy bane :
 Rhime is the Rock on which thou art to wreck,
 'Tis fatal to thy Fame and to thy Neck.
 Why should thy Metre good King *David* blast ?
 A Psalm of his will Surely be thy last.
 Dar'st thou presume in verse to meet thy foes,

Thou whom the Penny Pamphlet foil'd in prose?
Doeg, whom God for Mankind's mirth has made,
 O'er-tops thy tallent in thy very Trade;
Doeg to thee, thy paintings are so Course,
 A Poet is, though he's the Poets Horse.
 A Double Noose thou on thy Neck dost pull
 For Writing Treason and for Writing dull;
 To die for Faction is a common Evil,
 But to be hang'd for Non-sense is the Devil.
 Hadst thou the Glories of thy King exprest,
 Thy praises had been Satyr at the best;
 But thou in Clumsy verse, unlickt, unpointed,
 Hast Shamefully defi'd the Lord's Anointed:
 I will not rake the Dunghill of thy Crimes,
 For who would reade thy Life that reads thy rhimes?
 But of King *David's* Foes be this the Doom,
 May all be like the Young-man *Absalom*;
 And for my Foes may this their Blessing be,
 To talk like *Doeg* and to Write like Thee.

ALEXANDER POPE

1688-1744

An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot

[This is Pope's *apologia pro vita sua*, and some knowledge of his life is needed to understand it. Born in 1688, of respectable Catholic stock, Pope lived and died a Catholic. He was deformed and sickly; a great reader, if no great scholar; and a precocious poet. His *Pastorals*, written (he says) at sixteen, and praised while in manuscript by Walsh, were published in 1709. With the *Essay on Criticism* and the *Rape of the Lock* (1711) he leapt into fame. The next twelve years were spent largely on translating Homer, and in 1725 he edited Shakespeare. After gibbeting his literary foes, at Swift's suggestion, in the *Dunciad* (1728), he 'stooped to truth' under Bolingbroke's influence, and 'moralized his song' by versifying Bolingbroke's philosophy in the *Essay on Man* (1732). The Epistle

Arbuthnot] Pope's friend and physician, and himself a wit.

to Arbuthnot (written before his mother's death in 1733) served as prologue to his Horatian *Satires* on contemporary society.

In an age of ferocious politics, Pope was no politician, and at first consorted as much with Whigs like Addison as with Tories like Swift, Arbuthnot, Atterbury, and Bolingbroke. But his friendships and enmities drew or drove him more and more towards the Tories. He took umbrage at Addison's praise of a rival poet, Ambrose Phillips ('Namby-Pamby'), and suspected him of instigating a rival translation of Homer. Bentley had an old feud with Atterbury, and had said of Pope's *Iliad* that 'you must not call it Homer'. Theobald, having criticized his Shakespeare, was made King of the Dunces, till deposed in favour of Cibber, with whom Pope had a fresher quarrel. A literary flirtation with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu ended in a rupture, which involved her friend Lord Hervey. The old critic Dennis had galled Pope even before the *Essay on Criticism*.

And here, 'as in a votive tablet', his character is laid open—childishly vain and thin-skinned, rancorous and snobbish, but truly attached to his parents, his friends, and his art.

The names not explained in the notes are either well known (like Congreve), or unknown (like Bufo), or merely symbolic (like Cornus).]

P. **S**HUT, shut the door, good John ! fatigu'd I said,
Tye up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.
The dog-star rages ! nay 'tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out :
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.

What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide ?
They pierce my thickets, thro' my grot they glide,
By land, by water, they renew the charge,
They stop the chariot, and they board the barge.
No place is sacred, not the church is free,
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me :
Then from the Mint walks forth the man of rhyme,
Happy ! to catch me, just at dinner-time.

Is there a parson, much be-mus'd in beer,
A maudlin poetess, a rhyming peer,

John] Pope's manservant.
the Mint] then a sanctuary for bankrupts.

A clerk, foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,
 Who pens a stanza, when he should engross?
 Is there, who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
 With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls?
 All fly to Twit'nam, and in humble strain
 Apply to me, to keep them mad or vain.
 Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
 Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause:
 Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope,
 And curses wit, and poetry, and Pope.

Friend to my life! (which did not you prolong,
 The world had wanted many an idle song)
 What drop or nostrum can this plague remove?
 Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or love?
 A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped.
 If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead.
 Seiz'd and ty'd down to judge, how wretched I!
 Who can't be silent, and who will not lye:
 To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace,
 And to be grave, exceeds all pow'r of face.
 I sit with sad civility, I read
 With honest anguish, and an aching head;
 And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
 This saving counsel, 'Keep your piece nine years.'

'Nine years!' cries he, who high in Drury-lane,
 Lull'd by soft zephyrs thro' the broken pane,
 Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before term ends,
 Oblig'd by hunger, and request of friends:
 'The piece, you think, is incorrect? why take it,
 I'm all submission, what you'd have it, make it.'

Three things another's modest wishes bound,
 My friendship, and a prologue, and ten pound.

Pitholeon sends to me: 'You know his Grace,
 'I want a patron; ask him for a place.'
 Pitholeon libell'd me—'but here's a letter

Twit'nam] Twickenham, where Pope lived. Arthur] Arthur
 Moore, father of the poetaster James Moore, afterwards mentioned.

Informs you, Sir, 'twas when he knew no better.
Dare you refuse him? *Curl* invites to dine,
He'll write a journal, or he'll turn divine.'

Bless me! a packet.—'Tis a stranger sues,
A virgin tragedy, an orphan muse.'
If I dislike it, 'Furies, death and rage!'
If I approve, 'Commend it to the stage.'
There, thank my stars, my whole commission ends,
The players and I are, luckily, no friends.

Fir'd that the house reject him, 'Sdeath I'll print it,
And shame the fools—Your int'rest, Sir, with *Lintot*.'
Lintot, dull rogue! will think your price too much:
'Not, Sir, if you revise it, and retouch.'
All my demurs but double his attacks;
At last he whispers, 'Do; and we go snacks.'
Glad of a quarrel, strait I clap the door,
Sir, let me see your works and you no more.

'Tis sung, when *Midas*' ears began to spring,
(*Midas*, a sacred person and a king)
His very minister who spy'd them first,
Some say his queen, was forc'd to speak, or burst.
And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my face?

A. Good friend, forbear! you deal in dang'rous things,
I'd never name queens, ministers, or kings;
Keep close to ears, and those let asses prick,
'Tis nothing—*P.* Nothing? if they bite and kick?
Out with it, *Dunciad*! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he's an ass:
The truth once told (and wherefore should we lie?)
The queen of *Midas* slept, and so may I.

You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.
Let peals of laughter, *Codrus*! round thee break,
Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty crack:

Curl] a piratical publisher.

Lintot] Pope's publisher.

Dunciad] Pope's satire of that title.

Pit, box, and gall'ry in convulsions hurl'd,
 Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting world.
 Who shames a scribler? break one cobweb thro',
 He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread anew:
 Destroy his fib or sophistry, in vain,
 The creature's at his dirty work again,
 Thron'd on the centre of his thin designs,
 Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines!
 Whom have I hurt? has poet yet, or peer,
 Lost the arch'd eye-brow, or Parnassian sneer?
 Does not one table Bavius still admit?
 Still to one bishop Philips seem a wit?
 Still Sappho—*A.* Hold; for God-sake—you'll offend,
 No names—be calm—learn prudence of a friend:
 I too could write, and I am twice as tall;
 But foes like these—*P.* One flatt'er's worse than all.
 Of all mad creatures, if the learn'd are right,
 It is the slaver kills, and not the bite.
 A fool quite angry is quite innocent:
 Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they repent.

One dedicates in high heroic prose,
 And ridicules beyond a hundred foes:
 One from all Grub-street will my fame defend,
 And more abusive, calls himself my friend.
 This prints my letters, that expects a bribe,
 And others roar aloud, 'Subscribe, subscribe.'

There are, who to my person pay their court:
 I cough like Horace, and, tho' lean, am short,
 Ammon's great son one shoulder had too high,
 Such Ovid's nose, and, 'Sir! you have an eye—'
 Go on, obliging creatures, make me see
 All that disgrac'd my betters, met in me.
 Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
 'Just so immortal Maro held his head:'

Philips] Ambrose Phillips, a pastoral poet, patronized by the Pri-mate of all Ireland. Ammon's great son] Alexander the Great. Maro] Virgil.

And when I die, be sure you let me know
Great Homer dy'd three thousand years ago.

Why did I write? what sin to me unknown
Dipt me in ink, my parents', or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd.

The muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not wife,
To help me thro' this long disease, my life,
To second, Arbuthnot! thy art and care,
And teach the being you preserv'd to bear.

But why then publish? Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
Well-natur'd Garth inflam'd with early praise,
And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd my lays;
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield read,
Ev'n mitred Rochester would nod the head,
And St. John's self, great Dryden's friends before,
With open arms receiv'd one poet more.

Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!
Happier their author, when by these belov'd!
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cooks.

Soft were my numbers; who could take offence
While pure Description held the place of sense?
Like gentle Fanny's was my flow'ry theme,
A painted mistress, or a purling stream.
Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill;
I wish'd the man a dinner, and sate still.
Yet then did Dennis rave in furious fret;
I never answer'd, I was not in debt.

Granville] Lord Lansdowne.

Walsh] a critic.

Garth] author of *The Dispensary*.

Talbot] Duke of Shrewsbury.

Somers] the Lord Keeper.

Sheffield] Earl of Mulgrave.

Rochester] Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester.

St. John] Viscount Bolingbroke.

Burnet] bishop and historian.

Oldmixon,

Cook] literary hacks, now forgotten.

Gildon, Dennis] critics.

If want provok'd, or madness made them print,
I wag'd no war with Bedlam or the Mint.

Did some more sober critic come abroad ;
If wrong, I smil'd ; if right, I kiss'd the rod.
Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.
Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.
Yer ne'er one sprig of laurel grac'd these ribalds,
From slashing Bentley down to pidling Tibalds :
Each wight, who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each word-catcher, that lives on syllables,
Ev'n such small critics some regard may claim,
Preserv'd in Milton's or in Shakespear's name.
Pretty ! in amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms !
The things we know are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there.

Wore others angry : I excus'd them too ;
Well might they rage, I gave them but their due.
A man's true merit 'tis not hard to find ;
But each man's secret standard in his mind,
That casting-weight pride adds to emptiness,
This, who can gratify ? for who can guess ?
The bard whom pilfer'd *Pastorals* renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half-a-crown,
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains, from hard-bound brains, eight lines a year ;
He, who still wanting, tho' he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left :
And he, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning :
And he, whose fustian's so scutlimely bad,
It is not poetry, but prose run mad :

Bentley} Richard Bentley, a great classical scholar.

Tibald} Titus T. Tib, who edited Shakespeare better than Pope.

The bard} Ambrose Phillips, who also translated *Persian Tales*.

All these, my modest Satire bad translate,
And own'd that nine such poets made a Tate.
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe !
And swear, not Addison himself was safe.

Peace to all such ! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires ;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease :
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise ;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer ;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike ;
Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend ;
Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging, that he ne'er oblig'd ;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause ;
While wits and Templars ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be ?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he !

What tho' my name stood rubric on the walls,
Or plaster'd posts, . . . in capitals ?
Or smoaking forth, a hundred hawkers' load,
On wings of winds came flying all abroad ?
I sought no homage from the race that write ;
I kept, like Asian monarchs, from their sight :
Poems I heeded (now be-rhym'd so long)
No more than thou, great George ! a birth-day song.
I ne'er with wits or witlings pass'd my days,

Tate] translator (with Brady) of the Psalms into verse.
Atticus] Addison.

My verse, and Queensb'ry weeping o'er thy urn !
Oh let me live my own, and die so too !
(To live and die is all I have to do :)
Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I please :
Above a patron, tho' I condescend
Sometimes to call a minister my friend.
I was not born for courts or great affairs ;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my pray'rs ;
Can sleep without a poem in my head,
Nor know, if Dennis be alive or dead.

Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light ?
Heav'ns ! was I born for nothing but to write ?
Has life no joys for me ? or, to be grave,
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save ?
'I found him close with Swift ?—Indeed ? no doubt
(Cries prating Balbus) something will come out.'
'Tis all in vain, deny it as I will,
'No, such a genius never can lie still ;'
And then for mine obligingly mistakes
The first lampoon Sir Will. or Bubo makes.
Poor guiltless I ! and can I chuse but smile,
When ev'ry coxcomb knows me by my style ?

Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give virtue scandal, innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-ey'd virgin steal a tear !
But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,
Insults fall'n worth, or beauty in distress,
Who loves a lye, lame slander helps about,
Who writes a libel, or who copies out :
That fop, whose pride affects a patron's name.
Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame ;

Queensb'ry] the Duchess of Q., Gay's last patroness.

Sir Will.] Sir William Yonge, a lively supporter of Walpole's.

Bubo] Bubb Doddington, Lord Melcombe, a diarist 'of importance in his time'.

Who can your merit selfishly approve,
 And show the sense of it without the love ;
 Who has the vanity to call you friend,
 Yet wants the honour, injur'd, to defend ;
 Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
 And, if he lye not, must at least betray :
 Who to the Dean and silver bell can swear,
 And sees at Cannons what was never there ;
 Who reads, but with a lust to misapply,
 Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lye ;
 A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
 But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.

Let Sporus tremble—A. What? that thing of silk,
 Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?
 Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
 Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?

P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
 This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings ;
 Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
 Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys :
 So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
 In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
 Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
 As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
 Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
 And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks ;
 Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
 Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
 In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
 Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
 His wit all see-saw, between that and this,
 Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
 And he himself one vile antithesis.

Cannons] the seat of the Duke of Chandos, whose 'silver bell' and
 chaplain-Dean Pope was alleged (falsely, he says) to have satirized
 in his *Moral Epistles*. Sporus] Lord Hervey, a friend of Lady
 Mary Wortley Montagu.

Amphibious thing ! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the rabbins have exprest,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest.
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.

Not fortune's worshipper, nor fashion's fool,
Not lucre's madman, nor ambition's tool,
Not proud, nor servile ; be one poet's praise,
That, if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways :
That flatt'ry, ev'n to kings, he held a shame,
And thought a lye in verse or prose the same,
That not in fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to truth, and moraliz'd his song :
That not for fame, but virtue's better end,
He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half approving wit,
The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit ;
Laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had,
The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad ;
The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed ;
The tale reviv'd, the lye so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash, and dulness not his own ;
The morals blacken'd when the writings 'scape,
The libel'd person, and the pictur'd shape ;
Abuse, on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,
A friend in exile, or a father dead ;
The whisper, that to greatness still too near,
Perhaps yet vibrates on his sov'reign's ear—
Welcome for thee, fair virtue ! all the past :
For thee, fair virtue ! welcome ev'n the last !

A. But why insult the poor, affront the great ?
P. A knave's a knave, to me, in ev'ry state :
Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,

Sporns at court, or Japhet in a jail,
 A hireling scribler, or a hireling peer,
 Knight of the post corrupt, or of the shire ;
 If on a pillory, or near a throne,
 He gain his prince's ear, or lose his own.

Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
 Sappho can tell you how this man was bit :
 This dreaded sat'rist Dennis will confess
 Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress :
 So humble, he has knock'd at Tibbald's door,
 Has drunk with Cibber, nay has rhym'd for Moore.
 Full ten years slander'd, did he once reply ?
 Three thousand suns went down on Welsted's lye.
 To please a mistress one aspers'd his life :
 He lash'd him not, but let her be his wife ;
 Let Budgel charge low Grub-street on his quill,
 And write whate'er he pleas'd, except his will ;
 Let the two Curls of town and court, abuse
 His father, mother, body, soul, and muse.
 Yet why ? that father held it for a rule,
 It was a sin to call our neighbour fool :
 Unspotted names, and memorable long !
 If there be force in virtue, or in song.

Of gentle blood, part shed in honour's cause,
 While yet in Britain honour had applause,
 Each parent sprung—A. What fortune, pray?—

P. Their own,
 And better got, than Bestia's from the throne.
 Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,
 Nor marrying discord in a noble wife,
 Stranger to civil and religious rage,
 The good man walk'd innoxious thro' his age.

Sappho] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Cibber] Colley Cibber, actor and dramatist. Moore] James Moore, poetaster. Welsted] said to have libelled Pope to the Duke of Chandos (see above). Budgel] a journalist; and, Pope insinuates, a forger. Bestia] the Duke of Marlborough (?). marrying discord] like Dryden and Addison, who married titled wives.

No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
Nor dar'd an oath, nor hazarded a lye.
Unlearn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
No language, but the language of the heart.
By nature honest, by experience wise,
Healthy by temp'rance, and by exercise ;
His life, tho' long, to sickness past unknown,
His death was instant, and without a groan.
O grant me thus to live, and thus to die !
Who sprung from kings shall know less joy than I.

O friend ! may each domestic bliss be thine !
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine :
Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing age,
With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep a while one parent from the sky !
On cares like these if length of days attend,
May heav'n, to bless those days, preserve my friend,
Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he serv'd a queen.

A. Whether that blessing be deny'd or giv'n,
Thus far was right, the rest belongs to heav'n.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

1728-1774

The Deserted Village

SWEET AUBURN ! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd :
Dear lovely bower of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often hov' I loiter'd o'er thy steen,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene ;

How often have I paus'd on every charm,
 The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
 The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
 The decent church that topp'd the neighbouring hill,
 The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
 For talking age and whisp'ring lovers made ;
 How often have I bless'd the coming day,
 When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
 And all the village train, from labour free,
 Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree ;
 While many a pastime circled in the shade,
 The young contending as the old survey'd ;
 And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
 And sleights of art and feats of strength went round ;
 And still as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
 Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd ;
 The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
 By holding out to tire each other down ;
 The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
 While secret laughter titter'd round the place ;
 The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
 The matron's glance that would those looks reprove :
 These were thy charms, sweet village ; sports like
 these,
 With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please ;
 These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
 These were thy charms—But all these charms are fled.
 Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
 And desolation saddens all thy green :
 One only master grasps the whole domain,
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain :
 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
 But chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way.
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
 The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;

Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.)
Sunk are thy bowers in shapless ruin all,
And the long grass o'er tops the mould'ring wall :
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away, thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,) Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :)
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made ;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,) When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.)

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man ;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more :
His best companions, innocence and health ;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd ; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp repose ;
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,
Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green ;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore, ||
And rural mirth and manners are no more. ||

Sweet AUBURN ! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year claps'd, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,

Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wand'rings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations pass'd,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease ;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ;
No surly porter stands in guilty state
To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend ;
Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
While Resignation gently slopes the way ;
And, all his prospects bright'ning to the last,
His Heaven commences ere the world be pass'd !

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose ;
There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below ;

The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young ;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school ;
The watchdog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring ;
She, wretched matron, forc'd, in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild ;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wished to change his place ;
Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour ;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train ;
He chid their wand'rings, but reliev'd their pain ;
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;

The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
 Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd ;
 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
 Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away ;
 Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
 Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.
 Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe ;
 Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,
 His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
 And e'en his failings lean'd to Virtue's side ;
 But in his duty prompt at every call,
 He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt, for all.
 And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
 To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
 He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
 Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
 And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,
 The reverend champion stood. At his control,
 Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;
 Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
 And his last falt'ring accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
 His looks adorn'd the venerable place ;
 Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
 And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.
 The service pass'd, around the pious man,
 With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;
 Even children follow'd with endearing wile,
 And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.
 His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
 Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distress'd ;
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in Heaven.

As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swell's from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine scurries on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school ;
A man severe he was, and stern to view ;
I knew him well, and every truant knew ;
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face ;
Full well they laugh'd, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd ;
Yet he was kind ; or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault ;
The village all declar'd how much he knew ;
'Twas certain he could write, and cypher too ;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,
For e'en though vanquish'd, he could argue still ;
While words of learned length and thund'ring sound
Amazed the gazing rustics rang'd around,
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace
 The parlour splendours of that festive place ;
 The white-wash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
 The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door ;
 The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,
 A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day ;
 The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,
 The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose ;
 The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
 With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay ;
 While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
 Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain, transitory splendours ! Could not all
 Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall ?
 Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
 An hour's importance to the poor man's heart ;
 Thither no more the peasant shall repair
 To sweet oblivion of his daily care ;
 No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
 No more the wood-man's ballad shall prevail ;
 No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
 Relax his pond'rous strength, and lean to hear ;
 The host himself no longer shall be found
 Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;
 Nor the coy maid, half willing to be press'd,
 Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
 These simple blessings of the lowly train ;
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art ;
 Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
 The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway ;

The twelve good rules} Table of moral precepts hung up in
 taverns.

the royal game of goose} something like backgammon.

Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, uneonfin'd :
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore ;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied ;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds ;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half their growth ;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green ;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies :
While thus the land adorn'd for pleasure, all
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes :
But when those charms are pass'd, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,

She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
 In all the glaring impotence of dress.
 Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd,
 In nature's simplest charms at first array'd ;
 But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise ;
 While scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,
 The mournful peasant leads his humble band ;
 And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
 The country blooms—a garden, and a grave.

Where then, ah ! where, shall poverty reside,
 To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride ?
 If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,
 He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
 And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped—What waits him there ?
 To see profusion that he must not share ;
 To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd
 To pamper luxury, and thin mankind ;
 To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
 Extorted from his fellow creature's woe.
 Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade ;
 Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
 There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
 The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign
 Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train :
 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
 Sure these denote one universal joy !
 Are these thy serious thoughts ?—Ah, turn thine eyes
 Where the poor houseless shiv'ring female lies.
 She once, perhaps, in village plenty bless'd,
 Has wept at tales of innocence distress'd ;

Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn ;
Now lost to all ; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet AUBURN, thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain ?
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread !

Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore ;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day ;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ;
Those pois'rous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around ;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake ;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murd'rous still than they ;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Altama] Alatamha, a river in Georgia.

Good heaven ! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
That call'd them from their native walks away ;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure pass'd,
Hung round their bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main ;
And shudd'ring still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep.
The good old sire the first prepar'd to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe ;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear :
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O Luxury ! thou curs'd by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee !
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy !
Kingdoms, by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own ;
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe ;
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

E'en now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done ;
E'en now, methinks, as pond'ring here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land :

Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with ev'ry gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there ;
And piety, with wishes plac'd above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !
Farewell, and Oh ! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime ;
Aid slighted truth ; with thy persuasive strain
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain ;
Teach him, that states of native strength possess'd,
Though very poor, may still be very bless'd ;
That trade's proud empire hastens to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away ;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

Torno] perhaps Lake Torneo in Sweden.
Pambamarca] a mountain near Quito.

WILLIAM COWPER

1731-1800

*On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out
of Norfolk*

The Gift of my Cousin Ann Bodham

[Cowper's mother died when he was six. Cowper suffered from recurrent attacks of madness. He was 59 when he wrote this poem.]

O H that those lips had language ! Life has pass'd
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smiles I see,
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me ;
 Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say,
 'Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away !'
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
 (Blest be the art that can immortalize,
 The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
 To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
 Oh welcome guest, though unexpected, here !
 Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
 I will obey, not willingly alone,
 But gladly, as the precept were her own ;
 And, while that face renews my filial grief,
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief—
 Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
 A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother ! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?
 Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?
 Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unseen, a kiss ;
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
 Ah that maternal smile ! it answers—Yes.

I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu !
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting sound shall pass my lips no more !
Thy maidens griev'd themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of a quick return.
What ardently I wish'd, I long believ'd,
And, disappointed still, was still deceiv'd ;
By disappointment every day beguil'd,
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad *to-morrow* came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot ;
But, though I less deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry floor ;
And where the gard'ner Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capt,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we call'd the past'ral house our own.
Short-liv'd possession ! but the record fair
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effac'd
A thousand other themes less deeply trac'd.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid ;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;
The fragrant waters on my checks bestow'd
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd ;
All this, and more endearing still than all,

Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
 Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and brakes
 That humour interpos'd too often makes ;
 All this still legible in mem'ry's page,
 And still to be so, to my latest age,
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
 Not scorn'd in heav'n, though little notic'd here.

Could time, his flight revers'd, restore the hours,
 When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flow'rs,
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
 I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,
 Would'st softly speak, and stroke my head and smile)
 Could those few pleasant hours again appear,
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?
 I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
 Seems so to be desir'd, perhaps I might.—
 But no—what here we call our life is such,
 So little to be lov'd, and thou so much,
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
 (The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)
 Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
 Where spices breathe and brighter seasons smile,
 There sits quiescent on the floods that show
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
 While airs impregnated with incense play
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;
 So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reach'd the shore
 'Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,'
 And thy lov'd consort on the dang'rous tide
 Of life, long since, has anchor'd at thy side.
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,

Where tempests, &c.] from Garth.

Always from port withheld, always distress'd—
Me howling winds drive devious, tempest toss'd,
Sails ript, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosp'r'ous course.
But oh the thought, that thou art safe, and he !
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthron'd, and rulers of the earth ;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
And now, farewell—time, unrevok'd, has run
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem t' have liv'd my childhood o'er again ;
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine :
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic shew of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself remov'd, thy power to sooth me left.

WILLIAM BLAKE

1757-1827

The Book of Thel

Thel's Motto.

Does the Eagle know what is in the pit ;
Or wilt thou go ask the Mole ?
Can Wisdom be put in a silver rod,
Or Love in a golden bowl ?

THE daughters of [the] Seraphim led round their
sunny flocks—
All but the youngest : she in paleness sought the secret air,

To fade away like morning beauty from her mortal day :
 Down by the river of Adona her soft voice is heard,
 And thus her gentle lamentation falls like morning dew :—

‘ O life of this our spring ! why fades the lotus of the water ?

Why fade these children of the spring, born but to smile and fall ?

Ah ! Thel is like a wat’ry bow, and like a parting cloud ;
 Like a reflection in a glass ; like shadows in the water ;
 Like dreams of infants, like a smile upon an infant’s face ;
 Like the dove’s voice ; like transient day ; like music in the air.

Ah ! gentle may I lay me down, and gentle rest my head,
 And gentle sleep the sleep of death, and gentle hear the voice

Of Him that walketh in the garden in the evening time.’

The Lily of the Valley, breathing in the humble grass,
 Answered the lovely maid and said : ‘ I am a wat’ry weed,
 And I am very small, and love to dwell in lowly vales ;
 So weak, the gilded butterfly scarce perches on my head.
 Yet I am visited from heaven, and He that smiles on all
 Walks in the valley, and each morn over me spreads His hand,

Saying, “ Rejoice, thou humble grass, thou new-born lily-flower,

Thou gentle maid of silent valleys and of modest brooks ;
 For thou shalt be clothèd in light, and fed with morning manna,

Till summer’s heat melts thee beside the fountains and the springs,

To flourish in eternal vales.” Then why should Thel complain ?

Why should the mistress of the vales of Har utter a sigh ?

She ceas’d, and smil’d in tears, then sat down in her silver shrine.

Thel answer'd : ' O thou little Virgin of the peaceful valley,
 Giving to those that cannot crave, the voiceless, the o'er-tired ;
 Thy breath doth nourish the innocent lamb, he smells thy milky garments,
 He crops thy flowers while thou sittest smiling in his face,
 Wiping his mild and meekin mouth from all contagious taints.
 Thy wine doth purify the golden honey ; thy perfume, Which thou dost scatter on every little blade of grass that springs,
 Revives the milkèd cow, and tames the fire-breathing steed.
 But Thel is like a faint cloud kindled at the rising sun : I vanish from my pearly throne, and who shall find my place ? '

' Queen of the vales,' the Lily answer'd, ' ask the tender Cloud,
 And it shall tell thee why it glitters in the morning sky,
 And why it scatters its bright beauty thro' the humid air.
 Descend, O little Cloud, and hover before the eyes of Thel.'

The Cloud descended, and the Lily bowèd her modest head,
 And went to mind her numerous charge among the verdant grass.

II

' O little Cloud,' the Virgin said, ' I charge thee tell to me Why thou complainest not, when in one hour thou fade away : Then we shall seek thee, but not find. Ah ! Thel is like to thee : I pass away : yet I complain, and no one hears my voice.'

The Cloud then show'd his golden head and his bright
form emerg'd,
Hovering and glittering on the air before the face of Thel.

' O Virgin, know'st thou not our steeds drink of the
golden springs

Where Luvah doth renew his horses? Look'st thou on
my youth,

And fearest thou, because I vanish and am seen no more,
Nothing remains? O Maid, I tell thee, when I pass away,
It is to tenfold life, to love, to peace, and raptures holy:
Unseen descending, weigh my light wings upon balmy
flowers,

And court the fair-eyed dew, to take me to her shining
tent:

The weeping virgin, trembling, kneels before the risen sun,
Till we arise link'd in a golden band and never part,
But walk united, bearing food to all our tender flowers.'

' Dost thou, O little Cloud? I fear that I am not like thee,
For I walk thro' the vales of Har, and smell the sweetest
flowers,

But I feed not the little flowers; I hear the warbling
birds,

But I feed not the warbling birds; they fly and seek
their food:

But Thel delights in these no more, because I fade away;
And all shall say, "Without a use this shining woman
liv'd,

Or did she only live to be at death the food of worms?"'

The Cloud reclin'd upon his airy throne, and answer'd
thus:—

' Then if thou art the food of worms, O Virgin of the skies,
How great thy use, how great thy blessing! Everything
that lives

Lives not alone nor for itself. Fear not, and I will call
The weak Worm from its lowly bed, and thou shalt hear
its voice.

Come forth, Worm of the silent valley, to thy pensive
Queen.'

The helpless Worm arose, and sat upon the Lily's leaf,
And the bright Cloud sail'd on, to find his partner in the
vale.

III

Then Thel astonish'd view'd the Worm upon its dewy
bed.

'Art thou a Worm? Image of weakness, art thou but
a Worm?

I see thee like an infant wrapp'd in the Lily's leaf.

Ah! weep not, little voice, thou canst not speak, but
thou canst weep.

Is this a Worm? I see thee lay helpless and naked
weeping,

And none to answer, none to cherish thee with mother's
smiles.'

The Clod of Clay heard the Worm's voice and rais'd her
pitying head:

She bow'd over the weeping infant, and her life exhal'd
In milky fondness: then on Thel she fix'd her humble
eyes.

'O Beauty of the vales of Har! we live not for ourselves.
Thou seest me, the meanest thing, and so I am indeed.
My bosom of itself is cold, and of itself is dark;
But He, that loves the lowly, pours His oil upon my head,
And kisses me, and binds His nuptial bands around my
breast,
And says: "Thou mother of my children I have lovèd
thee,"

And I have given thee a crown that none can take away." But how this is, sweet Maid, I know not, and I cannot know;

I ponder, and I cannot ponder; yet I live and love.'

The Daughter of Beauty wip'd her pitying tears with her white veil,

And said: 'Alas! I knew not this, and therefore did I weep.

That God would love a worm I knew, and punish the evil foot

That wilful bruis'd its helpless form; but that He cherish'd it

With milk and oil I never knew, and therefore did I weep; And I complain'd in the mild air, because I fade away, And lay me down in thy cold bed, and leave my shining lot.'

'Queen of the vales,' the matron Clay answer'd, 'I heard thy sighs,

And all thy moans flew o'er my roof, but I have call'd them down.

Wilt thou, O Queen, enter my house? 'Tis given thee to enter

And to return: fear nothing, enter with thy virgin feet.'

IV

The eternal gates' terrific Porter lifted the northern bar: Thel enter'd in and saw the secrets of the land unknown. She saw the couches of the dead, and where the fibrous roots

Of every heart on earth infixes deep its restless twists: A land of sorrows and of tears where never smile was seen.

She wander'd in the land of clouds thro' valleys dark, list'ning

Dolours and lamentations; waiting oft beside a dewy grave

She stood in silence, list'ning to the voices of the ground,
Till to her own grave-plot she came, and there she sat
down,
And heard this voice of sorrow breathèd from the hollow
pit.

' Why cannot the Ear be closèd to its own destruction ?
Or the glist'ning Eye to the poison of a smile ?
Why are Eyelids stor'd with arrows ready drawn,
Where a thousand fighting men in ambush lie,
Or an Eye of gifts and graces show'ring fruits and coinèd
gold ?

Why a Tongue impress'd with honey from every wind ?
Why an Ear, a whirlpool fierce to draw creations in ?
Why a Nostril wide inhaling terror, trembling, and
affright ?

Why a tender curb upon the youthful, burning boy ?
Why a little curtain of flesh on the bed of our desire ? '

The Virgin started from her seat, and with a shriek
Fled back unhinder'd till she came into the vales of Har.

Vision of Beulah

THOU hearest the Nightingale begin the Song of
Spring :
The Lark, sitting upon his earthy bed, just as the morn
Appears, listens silent ; then, springing from the waving
corn-field, loud
He leads the Choir of Day—trill ! trill ! trill ! trill !
Mounting upon the wings of light into the great Expanse,
Re-echoing against the lovely blue and shining heavenly
Shell ;
His little throat labours with inspiration ; every feather
On throat and breast and wings vibrates with the effluence
Divine :
All Nature listens silent to him, and the awful Sun

Stands still upon the mountain looking on this little Bird
 With eyes of soft humility and wonder, love and awe.
 Then loud from their green covert all the Birds begin
 their song :

The Thrush, the Linnet and the Goldfinch, Robin and
 the Wren

Awake the Sun from his sweet reverie upon the mountain :
 The Nightingale again assays his song, and thro' the day
 And thro' the night warbles luxuriant ; every Bird of song
 Attending his loud harmony with admiration and love.
 This is a Vision of the lamentation of Beulah over Ololon.

Thou perceivest the Flowers put forth their precious
 Odours ;

And none can tell how from so small a centre comes such
 sweet,

Forgetting that within that centre Eternity expands
 Its ever-during doors, that Og and Anak fiercely guard.
 First, ere the morning breaks, joy opens in the flowery
 bosoms,

Joy even to tears, which the Sun rising dries : first the
 Wild Thyme

And Meadow-sweet, downy and soft, waving among the
 reeds,

Light springing on the air, lead the sweet dance ; they
 wake

The Honeysuckle sleeping on the oak ; the flaunting
 beauty

Revels along upon the wind ; the White-thorn, lovely
 May,

Opens her many lovely eyes ; listening the Rose still
 sleeps—

None dare to wake her ; soon she bursts her crimson-
 curtain'd bed

And comes forth in the majesty of beauty. Every Flower,
 The Pink, the Jessamine, the Wallflower, the Carnation,
 The Jonquil, the mild Lily opes her heavens ; every Tree

And Flower and Herb soon fill the air with an innumerable
dance,

Yet all in order sweet and lovely. Men are sick with love !
Such is a Vision of the lamentation of Beulah over Oolon.

[From *Milton*.]

ROBERT BURNS

1759-1796

The Cotter's Saturday Night

MY lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend !
No mercenary bard his homage pays :
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed a friend's esteem and praise :
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene ;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways ;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been—
Ah ! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sough ;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh ;
The black'ning trains o' crows to their repose :
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree ;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher through
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin' noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnilie,
stacher] stagger. flichterin'] stuttering. ingle] hearth.

His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,

The lisping infant prattling on his knee,

Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,

An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,

At service out, amang the farmers roun' ;

Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin

A cannie errand to a neibor town :

Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,

Comes hame, perhaps to shew a braw new gown,

Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,

To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,

An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers :

The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnoticed fleet ;

Each tells the uncous that he sees or hears ;

The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years ;

Anticipation forward points the view.

The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,

Gars auld claes look amraig as weel 's the new ;

The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,

The younkers a' are warnèd to obey ;

An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,

An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play :

'And O ! be sure to fear the Lord alway,

An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night !

Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,

Implore His counsel and assisting might :

They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright !'

kiaugh] anxiety.

uncous] strange things.

Belyve] Soon.

eydent] diligent.

tentie] heedful.

jauk] dally.

But hark ! a rap comes gently to the door ;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek ;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny haflins is afraid to speak ;
Weel pleased the mother hears it's nae wild worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben ;
A strappin' youth ; he takes the mother's eye ;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill ta'en ;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave ;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave ;
Weel-pleased to think her bairn 's respected like the lave.

O happy love ! where love like this is found ;
O heart-felt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !
I've pacèd much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
' If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
' Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening
gale.'

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch, a villain, lost to love and truth—
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth ?
Curse on his perjur'd arts, dissembling smooth !

haflins] half. cracks] chats. blate] shy.
laithfu'] backward. lave] rest.

Are hononr, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
 Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
 Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
 Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

'But now the supper crowns their simple board,
 The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food :
 The sowpe their only hawkie does afford,
 That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood ;
 The dame brings forth in complimentary mood,
 To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell ;
 And aft he 's prest, and aft he ca's it good ;
 The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell
 How 'twas a towmond auld sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
 They round the ingle form a circle wide ;
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
 The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride :
 His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
 His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare ;
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide—
 He wales a portion with judicious care,
 And 'Let us worship God !' he says with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim :
 Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
 Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name ;
 Or noble Elgin beets the heav'nward flame,
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :
 Compared with these, Italian trills are tame ;
 The tickled ears no heartfelt raptures raise ;
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

sowpe] beverage. hawkie] cow. hallan] partition.
 hain'd] saved. kebbuck] cheese. fell] tasty. towmond]
 twelvemonth. i' the bell] in flower. lyart haffets] grizzled
 temples. wales] chooses. beets] adds fuel to.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high ;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire ;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire ;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;
How He who bore in Heaven the second name
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head ;
How His first followers and servants sped ;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land :
How he, was lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lom's doom pronounced by Heaven's
command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King
The saint, the father, and the husband prays :
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing'
That thus they all shall meet in future days :
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear ;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's every grace, except the heart !
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,

The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ;
 But haply, in some cottage far apart,
 May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul ;
 And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their several way ;
 The youngling cottagers retire to rest :
 The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
 And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
 That He who stills the raven's clamorous nest,
 And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
 Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
 For them and for their little ones provide ;
 But chiefly in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
 That makes her loved at home, revered abroad :
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
 'An honest man 's the noblest work of God' ;
 And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
 The cottage leaves the palace far behind ;
 What is a lordling's pomp ? a cumbrous load,
 Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
 Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd !

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent !
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content !
 And O may Heaven their simple lives prevent
 From luxury's contagion, weak and vile ;
 Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

O Thou ! who poured the patriotic tide
 That streamed thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
 Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,

Or nobly die--the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward !)

O never, never, Scotia's realm desert ;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard !

Tam o' Shanter

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neibors neibors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate ;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter—
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam ! hadst thou but been sae wise
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice !
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A bletherin', blusterin', drunken blellum ;
That frae November till October,
Ac market-day thou was na sober ;
That ilka melder wi' the miller
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;

chapman billies] pedlar fellows. gate] road. nappy] ale.
skellum] good-for-nothing. bletherin'] prating. blellum]
prater. ilka] every. melder] grinding of meal.

That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
 The smith and thee gat roarin' fou on ;
 That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
 She prophesied that, late or soon,
 Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon ;
 Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk
 By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames ! it gars me greet
 To think how mony counsels sweet,
 How mony lengthen'd sage advices,
 The husband frae the wife despises !

But to our tale : Ae market night,
 Tam had got planted unco right,
 Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
 Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely ;
 And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
 His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony ;
 Tam lo'ed him like a very brither ;
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.
 The night drove on wi' sangs and clatter,
 And aye the ale was growing better :
 The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
 Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious ;
 The souter tauld his queerest stories ;
 The landlord's laugh was ready chorus :
 The storm without might rair and rustle,
 Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy.
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
 The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure ;
 Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious !

But pleasures are like poppies spread—
 You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed ;
 teaming] creaming, frothing. swats] ale. crony] chum.

Or like the snow falls in the river—
A moment white, then melts for ever ;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place ;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time nor tide ;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride ;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour, he mounts his beast in ;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last ;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast ;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd ;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd :
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire ;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet ;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet ;
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares.
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd ;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane ;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn ;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.

skelpit] slapped. dub] puddle. houlets] owls.

Before him Doon pours all his floods ;
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods ;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole ;
 Near and more near the thunders roll :
 When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a breeze ;
 Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing ;
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn !
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn !
 Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil ;
 Wi' usquebae, we'll face the devil !
 The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
 Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle !
 But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
 She ventur'd forward on the light ;
 And, vow ! Tam saw an unco sight !
 Warlocks and witches in a dance !
 Nae cotillon brent new frae France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 A winnock-bunker in the east,
 There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast—
 A touzie tyke, black, grim, and large !
 To gie them music was his charge :
 He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.
 Coffins stood round like open presses,
 That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses ;
 And by some devilish cantraip sleight
 Each in its cauld hand held a light,
 By which heroic Tam was able
 To note upon the haly table

bore] hole. usquebae] whisky. boddle] small Scots coin.
 winnock-bunker] window-chest. touzie] shaggy. tyke] dog.
 skirl] shriek. dirl] quiver. cantraip] spell.

A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns ;
 Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns ;
 A thief new-cutted frae the rape—
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape ;
 Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted ;
 Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted ;
 A garter, which a babe had strangled :
 A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft—
 The gray hairs yet stack to the heft ;
 Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
 Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowl'd, amaz'd, and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious :
 The piper loud and louder blew ;
 The dancers quick and quicker flew ;
 They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
 And coost heruddies to the wark,
 And linkit at it in her sark !

Now Tam, O Tam ! had thae been queans,
 A' plump and strapping in their teens ;
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
 Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen !
 Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
 That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
 I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
 For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies !

But wither'd beidams, auld and droll,
 Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
 Louping and flinging on a crummock,
 I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kent what was what fu' brawlie :
 There was ae winsome wench and walie

cleekit] linked. carlin] crone. sark] shirt. Rigwoodie] Withered. spean] wean. crummock] crooked staff.
 walie] large

That night enlisted in the core,
 Lang after kent on Carrick shore !
 (For mony a beast to dead she shot,
 And perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
 And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
 And kept the country-side in fear.)
 Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
 That while a lassie she had worn,
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
 It was her best, and she was vauntie.
 Ah ! little kent thy reverend grannie
 That sark she cost for her wee Nannie
 Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches)
 Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches !

But here my muse her wing maun cour ;
 Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r—
 To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
 (A couple jade she was, and strang) ;
 And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
 And thought his very een enrich'd ;
 Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
 And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main :
 Till first ae caper, syne anither,
 Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
 And roars out ' Weel done, Cutty-sark ! '
 And in an instant all was dark !
 And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke
 When plundering herds assail their byke,
 As open pussie's mortal foes
 When pop ! she starts before their nose,
 As eager runs the market-crowd,
 When ' Catch the thief ! ' resounds aloud,

bear] a kind of barley. harn] yarn. cost] bought.
 hotch'd] fidgeted. tint] lost. fyke] fuss. byke] hive.

So Maggie runs ; the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch skriech and hollow.

Ah, Tam ! ah, Tam ! thou'll get thy fairin' !
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin' !
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin' !
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman !
Now do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane o' the brig :
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they darena cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake !
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle ;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle !
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail :
The carlin caught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Each man and mother's son, take heed ;
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks rin in your mind,
Think ! ye may buy the joys o'er dear
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

eldritch] frightful. skriech] shriek. fairin'] reward.
fient] deuce. ettle] intent. caught] clutched, caught.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH 1770-1850

The Ruined Cottage

[About 1796 Wordsworth wrote, but did not publish, a poem which he called *The Ruined Cottage*. He incorporated it in Book I of *The Excursion* (published 1814), where it is put into the mouth of a pious Scottish pedlar, and its poignancy softened by quietist reflections. These reflections, I believe, were added later, by removing them—and they come away without leaving a scar—we get something like the original bare tragedy.]

THUS did he speak. ‘I see around me here
 Things which you cannot see : we die, my Friend,
 Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
 And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
 Dies with him, or is changed ; and very soon
 Even of the good is no memorial left.

—The Poets, in their elegies and songs
 Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
 They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,
 And senseless rocks ; nor idly : for they speak,
 In these their invocations, with a voice
 Obedient to the strong creative power
 Of human passion. Sympathies there are
 More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
 That steal upon the meditative mind,
 And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I stood,
 And eyd its waters till we seemed to feel
 One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
 Of brotherhood is broken : time has been
 When, every day, the touch of human hand
 Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
 In mortal stillness ; and they ministered
 To human comfort. Stooping down to drink,
 Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
 The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
 Green with the moss of years, and subject only

To the soft handling of the elements :
There let it lie—how foolish are such thoughts !
Forgive them ;—never—never did my steps
Approach this door but she who dwelt within
A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
As my own child. Oli, Sir ! the good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
From that forsaken spring ; and no one came
But he was welcome ; no one went away
But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave.

'I speak,' continued he, 'of One whose stock
Of virtues bloomed beneath this lowly roof.
She was a Woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love ;
Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
Of her own thoughts : by some especial care
Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A Being, who by adding love to peace
Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side
The humble worth that satisfied her heart :
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom,
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished.—They who passed
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
After his daily work, until the light

Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost
 In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
 In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
 Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.

' Not twenty years ago, but you I think
 Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
 Two blighting seasons, when the fields were left
 With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
 A worse affliction in the plague of war:
 This happy Land was stricken to the heart!
 A Wanderer then among the cottages,
 I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
 The hardships of that season: many rich
 Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor;
 And of the poor did many cease to be,
 And their place knew them not. Meanwhile, abridged
 Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
 To numerous self-denials, Margaret
 Went struggling on through those calamitous years
 With cheerful hope, until the second autumn,
 When her life's Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,
 Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
 He lingered long; and, when his strength returned,
 He found the little he had stored, to meet
 The hour of accident or crippling age,
 Was all consumed. A second infant now
 Was added to the troubles of a time
 Laden, for them and all of their degree,
 With care and sorrow: shoals of artisans
 From ill-requited labour turned adrift
 Sought daily bread from public charity,
 They, and their wives and children—happier far
 Could they have lived as do the little birds
 That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite
 That makes her dwelling on the mountain rocks!

‘A sad reverse it was for him who long
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
That had no mirth in them ; or with his knife
Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—
Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament ; and with a strange,
Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty,
He mingled, where he might, the various tasks
Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
But this endured not ; his good humour soon
Became a weight in which no pleasure was :
And poverty brought on a petted mood
And a sore temper : day by day he drooped,
And he would leave his work—and to the town
Would turn without an errand his slack steps ;
Or wander here and there among the fields.
One while he would speak lightly of his babes,
And with a cruel tongue : at other times
He tossed them with a false unnatural joy :
And ’twas a rueful thing to see the looks
Of the poor innocent children. “Every smile,”
Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees,
“Made my heart bleed.”
. While thus it fared with them,
To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
To travel in a country far remote ;
And when these lofty elms once more appeared
What pleasant expectations lured me on
O’er the flat Common !—With quick step I reached
The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch ;
But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me
A little while ; then turned her head away
Speechless,—and, sitting down upon a chair,

Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
 Nor how to speak to her. Poor Wretch ! at last
 She rose from off her seat, and then,—O Sir !
 I cannot tell how she pronounced my name :—
 With fervent love, and with a face of grief
 Unutterably helpless, and a look
 That seemed to cling upon me, she enquired
 If I had seen her husband. As she spake
 A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
 Nor had I power to answer ere she told
 That he had disappeared—not two months gone.
 He left his house : two wretched days had past,
 And on the third, as wistfully she raised
 Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
 Like one in trouble, for returning light,
 Within her chamber-casement she espied
 A folded paper, lying as if placed
 To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
 She opened—found no writing, but beheld
 Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
 Silver and gold. “ I shuddered at the sight,”
 Said Margaret, “ for I knew it was his hand
 That must have placed it there ; and ere that day
 Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,
 From one who by my husband had been sent
 With the sad news, that he had joined a troop
 Of soldiers, going to a distant land.
 —He left me thus—he could not gather heart
 To take a farewell of me ; for he feared
 That I should follow with my babes, and sink
 Beneath the misery of that wandering life.”

‘ This tale did Margaret tell with many tears :
 And, when she ended, I had little power
 To give her comfort, and was glad to take
 Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
 To cheer us both. But long we had not talked

Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she looked around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
We parted.—'Twas the time of early spring ;
I left her busy with her garden tools ;
And well remember, o'er that fence she looked,
And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice
That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

' I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustomed load ; in heat and cold,
Through many a wood and many an open ground,
In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might befall ;
My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the "trotting brooks" and whispering trees,
And now the music of my own sad steps,
With many a short-lived thought that passed between,
And disappeared.

I journeyed back this way,
When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat
Was yellow ; and the soft and bladed grass,
Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,
I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.
Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look,—only, it seemed,
The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
Hung down in heavier tufts ; and that bright weed,
The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root
Along the window's edge, profusely grew
Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
And strolled into her garden. It appeared
To lag behind the season, and had lost

Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift
 Had broken their trim border-lines, and straggled
 O'er paths they used to deck : carnations, once
 Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
 For the peculiar pains they had required,
 Declined their languid heads, wanting support.
 The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,
 Had twined about her two small rows of peas,
 And dragged them to the earth.

Ere this an hour
 Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps ;
 A stranger passed ; and, guessing whom I sought,
 He said that she was used to ramble far.—
 The sun was sinking in the west ; and now
 I sate with sad impatience. From within
 Her solitary infant cried aloud ;
 Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
 The voice was silent. From the bench I rose ;
 But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
 The spot, though fair, was very desolate—
 The longer I remained, more desolate :
 And, looking round me, now I first observed
 The corner stones, on either side the porch,
 With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck o'er
 With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep,
 That fed upon the Common, thither came
 Familiarly, and found a couching-place
 Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
 From these tall elms ; the cottage-clock struck eight ;—
 I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
 Her face was pale and thin—her figure, too,
 Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
 “ It grieves me you have waited here so long,
 But, in good truth, I’ve wandered much of late ;
 And, sometimes—to my shame I speak—have need
 Of my best prayers to bring me back again.”
 While on the board she spread our evening meal,

She told me—interrupting not the work
Which gave employment to her listless hands—
That she had parted with her elder child ;
To a kind master on a distant farm
Now happily apprenticed.—“ I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause ; to-day
I have been travelling far ; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing this
Only, that what I seek I cannot find ;
And so I waste my time : for I am changed ;
And to myself,” said she, “ have done much wrong
And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping have I waked ; my tears
Have flowed as if my body were not such
As others are ; and I could never die.
But I am now in mind and in my heart
More easy ; and I hope,” said she, “ that God
Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home.”

It would have grieved

Your very soul to see her :
. evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward were cast ;
And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act
Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied ; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

‘ Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son’s use, some tokens of regard,

Which with a look of welcome she received ;
And I exhorted her to place her trust
In God's good love, and seek his help by prayer.
I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe,
The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
With the best hope and comfort I could give :
She thanked me for my wish ;—but for my hope
It seemed she did not thank me.

I returned,

And took my rounds along this road again
When on its sunny bank the primrose flower
Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
I found her sad and drooping : she had learned
No tidings of her husband ; if he lived,
She knew not that he lived ; if he were dead,
She knew not he was dead. She seemed the same
In person and appearance ; but her house
Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence ;
The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
As they had chanced to fall. Her infant Babe
Had from its mother caught the trick of grief,
And sighed among its playthings. I withdrew,
And once again entering the garden saw,
More plainly still, that poverty and grief
Were now come nearer to her : weeds defaced
The hardened soil, and knots of withered grass :
No ridges there appeared of clear black mould,
No winter greenness ; of her herbs and flowers,
It seemed the better part were gnawed away
Or trampled into earth ; a chain of straw,
Which had been twined about the slender stem
Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root ;

The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
—Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
She said, “ I fear it will be dead and gone
Ere Robert come again.” When to the House
We had returned together, she enquired
If I had any hope :—but for her babe
And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live, that she must die
Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
Still in its place ; his Sunday garments hung
Upon the self-same nail ; his very staff
Stood undisturbed behind the door.

And when,

In bleak December, I retraced this way,
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up
The employment common through these wilds, and
gained,
By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself ;
And for this end had hired a neighbour’s boy
To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,
And walked with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far ; and, in such piteous sort
That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
That, wheresoe’er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted then—
Our final parting ; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I returned
Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years ;

From their first separation, nine long years,
She lingered in unquiet widowhood ;
A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting ! I have heard, my Friend,

That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day ;
And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
For hours she sate ; and evermore her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line ;
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
A man whose garments showed the soldier's red,
Or crippled mendicant in soldier's garb,
The little child who sate to turn the wheel
Ceased from his task ; and she with faltering voice
Made many a fond enquiry ; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,
And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully :
Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut
Sank to decay ; for he was gone, whose hand,
At the first nipping of October frost,
Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone ;
Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
Was sapped ; and while she slept, the nightly damps
Did chill her breast ; and in the stormy day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence ; and still that length of road,

And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
 Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my Friend,—
 In sickness she remained; and here she died;
 Last human tenant of these ruined walls !'

Lines

*Composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on re-visiting
 the banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798.*

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the length
 Of five long winters! and again I hear
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
 With a soft inland murmur.¹—Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
 That on a wild secluded scene impress
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
 Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
 Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
 Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
 Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
 The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to me
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:

¹ The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.
 [Wordsworth's note.]

But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
 And passing even into my purer mind,
 With tranquil restoration :—feelings too
 Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,
 As have no slight or trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life,
 His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,
 In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world,
 Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul :
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft—
 In darkness and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight ; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
 O sylvan Wye ! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee !

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
 With many recognitions dim and faint,

And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again :
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills ; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led : more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite ; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur ; other gifts
Have followed ; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains ; and of all that we behold
From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay :
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river ; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend ; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister ! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy : for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgements, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb

Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;
 And let the misty mountain-winds be free
 To blow against thee : and, in after years,
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure ; when thy mind
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; oh ! then,
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
 And these my exhortations ! Nor, perchance—
 If I should be where I no more can hear
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
 Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
 That on the banks of this delightful stream
 We stood together ; and that I, so long
 A worshipper of Nature, hither came
 Unwearied in that service : rather say
 With warmer love—oh ! with far deeper zeal
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake !

Resolution and Independence

I

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night ;
 The rain came heavily and fell in floods ;
 But now the sun is rising calm and bright ;
 The birds are singing in the distant woods ;
 Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods ;
 The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters ;
 And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

II

All things that love the sun are out of doors ;
 The sky rejoices in the morning's birth ;
 The grass is bright with rain-drops ;—on the moors
 The hare is running races in her mirth ;
 And with her feet she from the plashy earth
 Raises a mist ; that, glittering in the sun,
 Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor ;
 I saw the hare that raced about with joy ;
 I heard the woods and distant waters roar ;
 Or heard them not, as happy as a boy :
 The pleasant season did my heart employ :
 My old remembrances went from me wholly ;
 And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
 Of joy in minds that can no further go,
 As high as we have mounted in delight
 In our dejection do we sink as low ;
 To me that morning did it happen so ;
 And fears and fancies thick upon me came ;
 Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could
 name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky ;
 And I bethought me of the playful hare :
 Even such a happy Child of earth am I ;
 Even as these blissful creatures do I fare ;
 Far from the world I walk, and from all care ;
 But there may come another day to me—
 Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood ;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good ;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all ?

VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride ;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side :
By our own spirits are we deified :
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness ;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares :
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence ;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence ;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense :
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself ;

x

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
 Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age :
 His body was bent double, feet and head
 Coming together in life's pilgrimage ;
 As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
 Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
 A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

xi

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
 Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood :
 And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
 Upon the margin of that moorish flood
 Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
 That heareth not the loud winds when they call ;
 And moveth all together, if it move at all.

xii

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
 Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
 Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
 As if he had been reading in a book :
 And now a stranger's privilege I took ;
 And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
 ' This morning gives us promise of a glorious day.'

xiii

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
 In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew :
 And him with further words I thus bespake,
 ' What occupation do you there pursue ?
 This is a lonesome place for one like you.'
 Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
 Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

xiv

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men ; a stately speech ;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

xv

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor :
Employment hazardous and wearisome !
And he had many hardships to endure :
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor ;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance ;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

xvi

The old Man still stood talking by my side ;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard ; nor word from word could I divide ;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream ;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

xvii

My former thoughts returned : the fear that kills ;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed ;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills ;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
' How is it that you live, and what is it you do ? '

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat ;
 And said that, gathering leeches, far and wide
 He travelled ; stirring thus about his feet
 The waters of the pools where they abide.
 ' Once I could meet with them on every side ;
 But they have dwindled long by slow decay ;
 Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.'

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
 The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me :
 In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
 About the weary moors continually,
 Wandering about alone and silently.
 While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
 He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
 Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
 But stately in the main ; and, when he ended,
 I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
 In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
 ' God,' said I, ' be my help and stay secure ;
 I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor ! '

SIR WALTER SCOTT

1771-1832

Nelson, Pitt, and Fox

TO mute and to material things
 New life revolving summer brings ;
 The genial call dead Nature hears,
 And in her glory reappears.
 But oh ! my country's wintry state
 What second spring shall renovate ?

What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike and the wise ;
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,
The hand that grasp'd the victor steel ?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows ;
But vainly, vainly may he shine
Where glory weeps o'er NELSON's shrine ;
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
That shrouds, O Pitt, thy hallowed tomb !

Deep grav'd in every British heart,
O never let those names depart !
Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,
Who victor died on Gadite wave.
To him, as to the burning Ievin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given.
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Roll'd, blaz'd, destroy'd,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd worth
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launch'd that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia, Trafalgar ;
Who, born to guide such high emprise,
For Britain's weal was early wise ;
Alas ! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave !
His worth who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurn'd at the sordid lust of pelf,
And serv'd his Albion for herself ;

Gadite] belonging to Cadiz, i. e. Trafalgar.
hagen, i. e. the Battle of the Baltic.
Premier at 24.

Hafnia] Copen-
early wise] Pitt was

Who, when the frantic crowd amain
 Strain'd at subjection's bursting rein,
 O'er their wild mood full conquest gain'd,
 The pride, he would not crush, restrain'd,
 Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
 And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's laws.

Had'st thou but liv'd, though stripp'd of power,
 A watchman on the lonely tower,
 Thy thrilling trump had rous'd the land,
 When fraud or danger were at hand ;
 By thee, as by the beacon-light,
 Our pilots had kept course aright ;
 As some proud column, though alone,
 Thy strength had propp'd the tottering throne :
 Now is the stately column broke,
 The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
 The trumpet's silver sound is still,
 The warder silent on the hill !

Oh think, how to his latest day,
 When Death, just hovering, claim'd his prey,
 With Palinure's unalter'd mood,
 Firm at his dangerous post he stood ;
 Each call for needful rest repell'd,
 With dying hand the rudder held,
 Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
 The steerage of the realm gave way !
 Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
 One unpolluted church remains,
 Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
 The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
 But still, upon the hallow'd day,
 Convoke the swains to praise and pray ;
 While faith and civil peace are dear,
 Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
 He, who preserved them, Pitt, lies here !

[Palinure] Æneas's helmsman.

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
Because his rival slumbers nigh ;
Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
For talents mourn, untimely lost,
When best employ'd, and wanted most ;
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
And wit that lov'd to play, not wound ;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine ;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,---
They sleep with him who sleeps below :
And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
From error him who owns this grave,
Be every harsher thought suppress'd,
And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings ;
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung ;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke agen,
'All peace on earth, good-will to men' ;
If ever from an English heart,
O, *here* let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record, that Fox a Briton died !
When Europe crouch'd to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave
Was barter'd by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,
The sullied olive-branch return'd,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nail'd her colours to the mast !

Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
 A portion in this honour'd grave,
 And ne'er held marble in its trust
 Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endow'd,
 How high they soar'd above the crowd !
 Theirs was no common party race,
 Jostling by dark intrigue for place ;
 Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
 Shook realms and nations in its jar ;
 Beneath each banner proud to stand,
 Look'd up the noblest of the land,
 Till through the British world were known
 The names of Pitt and Fox alone.
 Spells of such force no wizard grave
 E'er fram'd in dark Thessalian cave,
 Though his could drain the ocean dry,
 And force the planets from the sky.
 These spells are spent, and, spent with these,
 The wine of life is on the lees ;
 Genius, and taste, and talent gone,
 For ever tomb'd beneath the stone,
 Where—taming thought to human pride !—
 The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
 Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,
 'Twill trickle to his rival's bier ;
 O'er Pitt's the mournful requiem sound,
 And Fox's shall the notes rebound.
 The solemn echo seems to cry,
 'Here let their discord with them die.
 Speak not for those a separate doom,
 Whom Fate made Brothers in the tomb ;
 But search the land of living men,
 Where wilt thou find their like again ?'

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLE RIDGE 1772-1834

Christabel

PART I

"TIS the middle of night by the castle clock,
 And the owls have awakened the crowing cock ;
 Tu—whit ! — Tu—whoo !
 And hark, again ! the crowing cock,
 How drowsily it crew.
 Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
 Hath a toothless mastiff bitch ;
 From her kennel beneath the rock
 She maketh answer to the clock,
 Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour ;
 Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
 Sixteen short howls, not over loud ;
 Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark ?
 The night is chilly, but not dark.
 The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
 It covers but not hides the sky.
 The moon is behind, and at the full ;
 And yet she looks both small and dull.
 The night is chill, the cloud is gray :
 'Tis a month before the month of May,
 And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
 Whom her father loves so well,
 What makes her in the wood so late,
 A furlong from the castle gate ?
 She had dreams all yesternight
 Of her own betrothéd knight ;
 And she in the midnight wood will pray
 For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
 The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
 And naught was green upon the oak
 But moss and rarest mistletoe :
 She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
 And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
 The lovely lady, Christabel !
 It moaned as near, as near can be,
 But what it is she cannot tell.—
 On the other side it seems to be,
 Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill ; the forest bare ;
 Is it the wind that moaneth bleak ?
 There is not wind enough in the air
 To move away the ringlet curl
 From the lovely lady's cheek—
 There is not wind enough to twirl
 The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
 That dances as often as dance it can,
 Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
 On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel !
 Jesu, Maria, shield her well !
 She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
 And stole to the other side of the oak.
 What sees she there ?

There she sees a damsel bright,
 Drest in a silken robe of white,
 That shadowy in the moonlight shone :
 The neck that made that white robe wan,
 Her stately neck, and arms were bare ;
 Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,

And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly !

Mary, mother, save me now !
(Said Christabel,) And who art thou ?

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet :—
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness :
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear !
Said Christabel, How camest thou here ?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet :—

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine :
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn :
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white :
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be ;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke :
He placed me underneath this oak ;

He swore they would return with haste ;
 Whither they went I cannot tell—
 I thought I heard, some minutes past,
 Sounds as of a castle bell.
 Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she)
 And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
 And comforted fair Geraldine :
 O well, bright dame ! may you command
 The service of Sir Leoline ;
 And gladly our stout chivalry
 Will he send forth and friends withal
 To guide and guard you safe and free
 Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose : and forth with steps they passed
 That strove to be, and were not, fast.

Her gracious stars the lady blest,
 And thus spake on sweet Christabel :
 All our household are at rest,
 The hall as silent as the cell ;
 Sir Leoline is weak in health,
 And may not well awakened be,
 But we will move as if in stealth,
 And I beseech your courtesy,
 This night, to share your couch with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
 Took the key that fitted well ;
 A little door she opened straight,
 All in the middle of the gate ;
 The gate that was ironed within and without,
 Where an army in battle array had marched out.
 The lady sank, belike through pain,
 And Christabel with might and main

Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate :
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court : right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress !
Alas, alas ! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court : right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make !
And what can ail the mastiff bitch ?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scratch :
For what can ail the mastiff bitch ?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will !
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying ;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame ;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
 And jealous of the listening air
 They steal their way from stair to stair,
 Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
 And now they pass the Baron's room,
 As still as death, with stifled breath !
 And now have reached her chamber door ;
 And now doth Geraldine press down
 The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
 And not a moonbeam enters here.
 But they without its light can see
 The chamber carved so curiously,
 Carved with figures strange and sweet,
 All made out of the carver's brain,
 For a lady's chamber meet :
 The lamp with twofold silver chain
 Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim ;
 But Christabel the lamp will trim.
 She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
 And left it swinging to and fro,
 While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
 Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
 I pray you, drink this cordial wine !
 It is a wine of virtuous powers ;
 My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
 Who am a maiden most forlorn ?
 Christabel answered—Woe is me !
 She died the hour that I was born.
 I have heard the grey-haired friar tell
 How on her death-bed she did say,

That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear ! that thou wert here !
I would, said Geraldine, she were !
But soon with altered voice, said she—
‘ Off, wandering mother ! Peak and pine !
I have power to bid thee flee.’
Alas ! what ails poor Geraldine ?
Why stares she with unsettled eye ?
Can she the bodiless dead espy ?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
‘ Off, woman, off ! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off ! ’tis given to me.’

Then Christabel knelt by the lady’s side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas ! said she, this ghastly ride—
Dear lady ! it hath wildered you !
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, ‘ tis over now !’

Again the wild-flower wine she drank :
Her fair large eyes ’gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright :
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
‘ All they who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel !
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befel,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself ; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.’

Quoth Christabel, So let it be !
 And as the lady bade, did she.
 Her gentle limbs did she undress,
 And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
 So many thoughts moved to and fro,
 That vain it were her lids to close ;
 So half-way from the bed she rose,
 And on her elbow did recline
 To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
 And slowly rolled her eyes around ;
 Then drawing in her breath aloud,
 Like one that shuddered, she unbound
 The cincture from beneath her breast :
 Her silken robe, and inner vest,
 Dropped to her feet, and full in view,
 Behold ! her bosom and half her side —
 A sight to dream of, not to tell !
 O shield her ! shield sweet Christabel !

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs ;
 Ah ! what a stricken look was hers !
 Deep from within she seems half-way
 To lift some weight with sick assay,
 And eyes the maid and seeks delay ;
 Then suddenly, as one defied,
 Collects herself in scorn and pride,
 And lay down by the Maiden's side ! —
 And in her arms the maid she took,

Ah wel-a-day !

And with low voice and doleful look
 These words did say :
 ' In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
 Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel !

Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;

But vainly thou warrest,

For this is alone in

Thy power to declare,

That in the dim forest

Thou heard'st a low moaning,

And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;

And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.'

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.

Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me !)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame ! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree ?
And lo ! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
 O Geraldine ! since arms of thine
 Have been the lovely lady's prison.
 O Geraldine ! one hour was thine—
 Thou'st had thy will ! By tairn and rill,
 The night-birds all that hour were still.
 But now they are jubilant anew,
 From cliff and tower, tu—whoo ! tu—whoo !
 Tu—whoo ! tu—whoo ! from wood and fell !

And see ! the lady Christabel
 Gathers herself from out her trance ;
 Her limbs relax, her countenance
 Grows sad and soft : the smooth thin lids
 Close o'er her eyes ; and tears she sheds—
 Large tears that leave the lashes bright !
 And oft the while she seems to smile
 As infants at a sudden light !

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
 Like a youthful hermitess,
 Beauteous in a wilderness,
 Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
 And, if she move unquietly,
 Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free
 Comes back and tingles in her feet.
 No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
 What if her guardian spirit 'twere,
 What if she knew her mother near ?
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,
 That saints will aid if men will call :
 For the blue sky bends over all !

[Note.—There is a second part, mostly far inferior; but the poem was never completed, and could never (I think) have been completed.]

From ‘The Vision of Judgement’

THE cherubs and the saints bow'd down before
That arch-angelic hierarch, the first
Of essences angelical, who wore

The aspect of a god ; but this ne'er nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core

No thought, save for his Master's service, durst
Intrude, however glorified and high;
He knew him but the viccroy of the sky.

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met—

They knew each other both for good and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could forget

His former friend and future foe ; but still
There was a high, immortal, proud regret

In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years

Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their 'champ clos' the spheres.

The spirits were in neutral space, before

The gate of heaven ; like eastern thresholds is
The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er,

And souls despatch'd to that world or to this ;
And therefore Michael and the other wore

A civil aspect : though they did not kiss,
Yet still betwixt his Darkness and his Brightness
There pass'd a mutual glance of great politeness.

The Archangel bow'd, not like a modern bcau,

But with a graceful Oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below

The heart in good men is supposed to tend;

hierarch] Michael. **the sombre, silent Spirit] Satan.**

He turn'd as to an equal, not too low,

But kindly ; Satan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

He merely bent his diabolic brow

An instant ; and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show

Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe

Eternal, more than other kings, endued

With better sense and hearts, whom history mentions,
Who long have ' paved hell with their good intentions '.

Michael began : ' What wouldest thou with this man,

Now dead, and brought before the Lord ? What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,

That thou canst claim him ? Speak ! and do thy will,
If it be just : if in this earthly span

He hath been greatly failing to fulfil

His duties as a king and mortal, say,

And he is thine ; if not, let him have way.'

' Michael ! ' replied the Prince of Air, ' even here,

Before the Gate of him thou servest, must

I claim my subject : and will make appear

That as he was my worshipper in dust,

So shall he be in spirit, although dear

To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust

Were of his weaknesses ; yet on the throne

He reign'd o'er millions to serve me alone.

' Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine* ; it was,

Once, more thy master's : but I triumph not

In this poor planet's conquest ; nor, alas !

Need he thou servest envy me my lot :

With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
In worship round him, he may have forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things :
I think few worth damnation save their kings,—

‘ And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as lord : and even had
I such an inclination, ’twere (as you
Well know) superfluous ; they are grown so bad,
That hell has nothing better left to do

Than leave them to themselves : so much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I worse.

‘ Look to the earth, I said, and say again :
When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth’s first bloom and flush to reign,
The world and he both wore a different form,
And much of earth and all the watery plain
Of ocean call’d him king : through many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of time ;
For the rough virtues chose them for their clime.

‘ He came to his sceptre young ; he leaves it old :
Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it ; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm ;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar’s vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest hearts ; and for the rest, but glance
Thine eye along America and France.

‘ ’Tis true, he was a tool from first to last
(I have the workmen safe) ; but as a tool
So let him be consumed. From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule

Of monarchs—from the bloody rolls amass'd
 Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsar's school,
 Take the worst pupil ; and produce a reign
 More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.

' He ever warr'd with freedom and the free :
 Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
 So that they utter'd the word " Liberty ! "

Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
 History was ever stain'd as his will be

With national and individual woes ?
 I grant his household abstinence ; I grant
 His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want ;

' I know he was a constant consort ; own
 He was a decent sire, and middling lord.
 All this is much, and most upon a throne ;
 As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
 Is more than at an anchorite's supper shown.

I grant him all the kindest can accord ;
 And this was well for him, but not for those
 Millions who found him what oppression chose.

' The New World shook him off ; the Old yet groans
 Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
 Completed : he leaves heirs on many thrones
 To all his vices, without what begot
 Compassion for him—his tame virtues ; drones
 Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
 A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
 Upon the thrones of earth ; but let them quake ! '

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY 1792-1822

The Sensitive Plant

PART FIRST

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
 And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
 And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
 And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
 Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere ;
 And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
 Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
 In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
 Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
 As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
 Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
 And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent
 From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flower and the tulip tall,
 And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
 Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
 Till they die of their own dear loveliness ;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
 Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale
 That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
 Through their pavilions of tender green ;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
 Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
 Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
 It was felt like an odour within the sense ;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed,
 Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
 Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
 The soul of her beauty and love lay bare :

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
 As a Maenad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
 Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
 Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky ;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tubrose,
 The sweetest flower for scent that blows ;
 And all rare blossoms from every clime
 Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
 Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,
 With golden and green light, slanting through
 Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
 And starry river-buds glimmered by,
 And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
 With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
 Which led through the garden along and across,
 Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
 Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
 As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
 And flow'rets which, drooping as day drooped too,
 Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
 To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
 The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
 Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
 Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun ;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,—

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower ;
Radiance and odour are not its dower ;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the Beautiful !

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings ;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar ;

The plumèd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass ;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears ;

The quivering vapours of dim noon tide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream ;

Each and all like ministering angels were
 For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
 Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
 Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from Heaven above,
 And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
 And delight, though less bright, was far more deep,
 And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were
 drowned

In an ocean of dreams without a sound ;
 Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress
 The light sand which paves it, consciousness ;

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale
 Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
 And snatches of its Elysian chant
 Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant) ;—

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
 Upgathered into the bosom of rest ;
 A sweet child weary of its delight,
 The feeblest and yet the favourite,
 Cradled within the embrace of Night.

PART SECOND

There was a Power in this sweet place,
 An Eve in this Eden ; a ruling Grace
 Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
 Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
 Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
 Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
 Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even :
And the meteors of that sublunar Heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when Night walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth !

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise .

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted Heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her lie lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed ;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her aëry footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Eras'd its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet ;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam ;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier-bands ;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
 And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
 She bore, in a basket of Indian woof,
 Into the rough woods far aloof,—

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full,
 The freshest her gentle hands could pull
 For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
 Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris
 Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
 The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
 Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
 Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
 She left clinging round the smooth and dark
 Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest Spring
 Thus moved through the garden ministering
 All the sweet season of Summertide,
 And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died !

PART THIRD

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
 Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,
 Or the waves of Baiae, ere luminous
 She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
 Felt the sound of the funeral chant,
 And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
 And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
 And the silent motions of passing death,
 And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
 Sent through the pores of the coffin-plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass ;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift Summer into the Autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf by leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed :
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds,
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set ;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks
 Were bent and tangled across the walks ;
 And the leafless network of parasite bowers
 Mashed into ruin ; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow
 All loathliest weeds began to grow,
 Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
 Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank.
 And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
 Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
 And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
 Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
 Prickly, and pulpos, and blistering, and blue,
 Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould
 Started like mist from the wet ground cold ;
 Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
 With a spirit of growth had been animated !

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
 Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,
 And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
 Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
 The vapours arose which have strength to kill ;
 At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
 At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
 Crept and flitted in broad noonday
 Unseen ; every branch on which they alit
 By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves, which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn ;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came : the wind was his whip :
One choppy finger was on his lip :
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles ;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound ;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne
By the tenfold blasts of the Arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost !

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want :
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again ;
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew ;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy, and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When Winter had gone and Spring came back
 The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck ;
 But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and darnels,
 Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

CONCLUSION

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
 Which within its boughs like a Spirit sat,
 Ere its outward form had known decay,
 Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that Lady's gentle mind,
 No longer with the form combined
 Which scattered love, as stars do light,
 Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess ; but in this life
 Of error, ignorance, and strife,
 Where nothing is, but all things seem,
 And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
 Pleasant if one considers it,
 To own that death itself must be,
 Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
 And all sweet shapes and odours there,
 In truth have never passed away :
 'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed ; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
 There is no death nor change : their might
 Exceeds our organs, which endure
 No light, being themselves obscure.

From the 'Letter to Maria Gisborne'

YOU are now

In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow
At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore
Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more.
Yet in its depth what treasures ! You will see
That which was Godwin,—greater none than he
Though fallen—and fallen on evil times—to stand
Among the spirits of our age and land,
Before the dread tribunal of *to come*
The foremost,—while Rebuke cowers pale and dumb.
You will see Coleridge—he who sits obscure
In the exceeding lustre and the pure
Intense irradiation of a mind,
Which, with its own internal lightning blind,
Flags wearily through darkness and despair—
A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,
A hooded eagle among blinking owls.—
You will see Hunt—one of those happy souls
Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom
This world would smell like what it is—a tomb ;
Who is, what others seem ; his room no doubt
Is still adorned with many a cast from Shout,
With graceful flowers tastefully placed about ;
And coronals of bay from ribbons hung,
And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung ;
The gifts of the most learned among some dozens
Of female friends, sisters-in-law, and cousins.
And there is he with his eternal puns,
Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns
Thundering for money at a poet's door ;
Alas ! it is no use to say, ' I'm poor ! '

Godwin] William Godwin, Shelley's father-in-law, author of *Political Justice*.
Hunt] Leigh Hunt.

Or oft in graver mood, when he will look
 Things wiser than were ever read in book,
 Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.—
 You will see Hogg,—and I cannot express
 His virtues,—though I know that they are great,
 Because he locks, then barricades the gate
 Within which they inhabit ;—of his wit
 And wisdom, you'll cry out when you are bit.
 He is a pearl within an oyster shell,
 One of the richest of the deep ;—and there
 Is English Peacock, with his mountain Fair,
 Turned into a Flamingo ;—that shy bird
 That gleams i' the Indian air—have you not heard
 When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,
 His best friends hear no more of him ?—but you
 Will see him, and will like him too, I hope,
 With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope
 Matched with this cameleopard—his fine wit
 Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it ;
 A strain too learnèd for a shallow age,
 Too wise for selfish bigots ; let his page,
 Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,
 Fold itself up for the serener clime
 Of years to come, and find its recompense
 In that just expectation.—Wit and sense,
 Virtue and human knowledge ; all that might
 Make this dull world a business of delight,
 Are all combined in Horace Smith.—And these,
 With some exceptions, which I need not tease
 Your patience by descanting on,—are all
 You and I know in London.

I recall

My thoughts, and bid you look upon the night.

Hogg] an Oxford friend of Shelley's. Peacock] Thomas Love Peacock, novelist and poet. his mountain Fair] Peacock's Welsh wife. Horace Smith] author, with his brother James, of *Rejected Addresses*.

As water does a sponge, so the moonlight
Fills the void, hollow, universal air—
What see you?—unpavilioned Heaven is fair,
Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,
Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan
Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep;
Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,
Piloted by the many-wandering blast,
And the rare stars rush through them dim and fast:—
All this is beautiful in every land.—
But what see you beside?—a shabby stand
Of Hackney coaches—a brick house or wall
Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl
Of our unhappy polities;—or worse—
A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse
Mixed with the watchman's, partner of her trade,
You must accept in place of serenade—
Or yellow-haired Pollonia murmuring
To Henry, some unutterable thing.
I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit
Built round dark caverns, even to the root
Of the living stems that feed them—in whose bowers
There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers;
Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn
Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne
In circles quaint, and ever-changing dance,
Like wingéd stars the fire-flies flash and glane,
Pale in the open moonshine, but each one
Under the dark trees seems a little sun,
A meteor tamed; a fixed star gone astray
From the silver regions of the milky way;—
Afar the Contadino's song is heard,
Rude, but made sweet by distance—and a bird
Which cannot be the Nightingale, and yet
I know none else that sings so sweet as it

Contadino] Italian peasant.

At this late hour ;—and then all is still—
Now—Italy or London, which you will !

Next winter you must pass with me ; I'll have
My house by that time turned into a grave
Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,
And all the dreams which our tormentors are ;
Oh ! that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock, and Smith were there,
With everything belonging to them fair !—
We will have books, Spanish, Italian, Greek ;
And ask one week to make another week
As like his father, as I'm unlike mine,
Which is not his fault, as you may divine.
Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,
Yet let's be merry : we'll have tea and toast ;
Custards for supper, and an endless host
Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies,
And other such lady-like luxuries,—
Feasting on which we will philosophize !
And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood,
To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood.
And then we'll talk ;—what shall we talk about ?
Oh ! there are themes enough for many a bout
Of thought-entangled descant ;—as to nerves—
With cones and parallelograms and curves
I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare
To bother me—when you are with me there.
And they shall never more sip laudanum,
From Helicon or Himeros ;—well, come,
And in despite of God and of the devil,
We'll make our friendly philosophic revel
Outlast the leafless time ; till buds and flowers
Warn the obscure inevitable hours,
Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew ;—
‘ To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.’

Himeros] Love.

Summer and Winter

IT was a bright and cheerful afternoon,
Towards the end of the sunny month of June,
When the north wind congregates in crowds
The floating mountains of the silver clouds
From the horizon—and the stainless sky
Opens beyond them like eternity.
All things rejoiced beneath the sun ; the weeds,
The river, and the corn-fields, and the reeds ;
The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
And the firm foliage of the larger trees.

It was a winter such as when birds die
In the deep forests ; and the fishes lie
Stiffened in the translucent ice, which makes
Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes
A wrinkled clod as hard as brick ; and when,
Among their children, comfortable men
Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold :
Alas, then, for the homeless beggar old !

JOHN KEATS

1795-1821

Ode on a Grecian Urn

I

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady ?
What men or gods are these ? What maidens loth ?
What mad pursuit ? What struggle to escape ?
What pipes and timbrels ? What wild ecstasy ?

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed ;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

The Eve of St. Agnes

I

ST. AGNES' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was !
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails :
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little door,
 And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
 Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor ;
 But no—already had his death-bell rung :
 The joys of all his life were said and sung :
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :
 Another way he went, and soon among
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman hcard the prelude soft ;
 And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
 Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their
 breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
 Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
 The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
 Of old romance. These let us wish away,
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
 On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
 As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,
 And soft adorings from their loves receive
 Upon the honey'd middle of the night,

If ceremonies due they did aright ;
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,
 She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by—she heeded not at all : in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
 And back retir'd ; not cool'd by high disdain,
 But she saw not : her heart was otherwhere :
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She dane'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :
 The hallow'd hour was near at hand : she sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy ; all amort,
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen ;
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things
 have been.

x

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

xi

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland :
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, ' Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place :
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !'

xii

' Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ;
 ' He had a fever late, and in the fit
 ' He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :
 ' Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 ' More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me ! fit !
 ' Flit like a ghost away.'—' Ah, Gossip dear,
 ' We're safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,
 ' And tell me how'—' Good Saints ! not here, not
 here ;
 ' Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.'

xiii

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
 Brushing the cobweb with his lofty plume,
 And as he mutter'd ' Well-a--well-a-day !'
 He found him in a little moonlight room,

Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 ' Now tell me where is Madeline,' said he,
 ' O tell me, Angla, by the holy loom
 ' Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
 ' When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously.'

xiv

' St. Agnes ! Ah ! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
 ' Yet men will murder upon holy days :
 ' Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
 ' And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
 ' To venture so : it fills me with amaze
 ' To see thee, Porphyro !—St. Agnes' Eve !
 ' God's help ! my lady fair the conjuror plays
 ' This very night : good angels her deceive !
 ' But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve.'

xv

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
 Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book,
 As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
 His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

xvi

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
 Made purple riot : then doth he propose
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :
 ' A cruel man and impious thou art :
 ' Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
 ' Alone with her good angels, far apart
 ' From wicked men like thee. Go, go !—I deem
 ' Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem.'

XVII

'I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,'
 Quoth Porphyro : 'O may I ne'er find grace
 'When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
 'If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 'Or look with ruffian passion in her face :
 'Good Angela, believe me by these tears ;
 'Or I will, even in a moment's space,
 'Awake, with horrid shout, my foesmen's ears,
 'And beard them, though they be more fang'd than
 wolves and bears.'

XVIII

'Ah ! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul ?
 'A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
 'Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;
 'Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
 'Were never miss'd.'—Thus plaining, doth she bring
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro ;
 So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
 That Angela gives promise she will do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
 Him in a closet, of such privacy
 That he might see her beauty unespied,
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
 While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
 Never on such a night have lovers met,
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX

'It shall be as thou wishest,' said the Dame :
 'All cates and dainties shall be stored there
 'Quickly on this feast-night : by the tambour frame
 'Her own lute thou wilt see : no time to spare,

' For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
 ' On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
 ' Wait here, my child, with patience ; kneel in prayer
 ' The while : Ah ! thou must needs the lady wed,
 ' Or may I never leave my grave among the dead.'

xxi

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd ;
 The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
 To follow her ; with aged eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste ;
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

xxii

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
 Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

xxiii

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died :
 She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide !
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side ;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

xxiv

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and
 kings.

xxv

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyro grew faint :
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

xxvi

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;
 Loosens her fragrant boddice ; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees :
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

xxvii

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
 Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;

Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness ;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breath'd himself : then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo !—how fast
she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet :—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone :—
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinted with cinnamon ;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathed silver : sumptuous they stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
 ‘ And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake !
 ‘ Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite :
 ‘ Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes’ sake,
 ‘ Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.’

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains :—twas a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as iced stream :
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam ;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies :
 It seem’d he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady’s eyes ;
 So mus’d awhile, entoil’d in woosed phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
 He play’d an ancient ditty, long since mute,
 In Provence call’d, ‘ La belle dame sans mercy : ’
 Close to her ear touching the melody ;—
 Wherewith di-turb’d, she utter’d a soft moan :
 He ceas’d—she panted quick—and suddenly
 Her blue astray’d eyes wide open shone :
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculpiuted stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awale, the vision of her sleep :
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell’d
 The blithe of her dream so pure and deep.

At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV

' Ah, Porphyro ! ' said she, ' but even now
' Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
' Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;
' And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear :
' How chang'd thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear !
' Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
' Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
' Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
' For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.'

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet ; meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarm patterning the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII

' Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :
' This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline ! '
' Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :
' No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
' Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
' Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ?
' I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
' Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ;—
' A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing.'

XXXVIII

' My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
 ' Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ?
 ' Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dyed ?
 ' Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 ' After so many hours of toil and quest,
 ' A famish'd pilgrim,—sav'd by miracle.
 ' Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
 ' Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well
 ' To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

' Hark ! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
 ' Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :
 ' Arise—arise ! the morning is at hand ;—
 ' The bloated wassailers will never heed :—
 ' Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
 ' There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
 ' Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
 ' Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be,
 ' For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.'

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door ;
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar ;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall ;
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide :
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flagon by his side :

The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide :—
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ;—
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII

And they are gone : aye, ages long ago
 These lovers fled away into the storm.
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
 Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old
 Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
 The Beadsman, after thousand ayes told,
 For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

Thomas Hood

1799-1845

The Bridge of Sighs'Drown'd ! drown'd !'—*Hamlet*.

ONE more Unfortunate,
 Weary of breath,
 Rashly importunate,
 Gone to her death !

Take her up tenderly,
 Lift her with care ;
 Fashion'd so slenderly,
 Young, and so fair !

Look at her garments
 Clinging like cerements ;
 Whilst the wave constantly
 Drips from her clothing ;
 Take her up instantly,
 Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully ;
 Think of her mournfully,
 Gently and humanly ;
 Not of the stains of her,
 All that remains of her
 Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
 Into her mutiny
 Rash and undutiful :
 Past all dishonour
 Death has left on her
 Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
 One of Eve's family—
 Wipe those poor lips of hers
 Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses
 Escaped from the comb,
 Her fair auburn tresses ;
 Whilst wonderment guesses
 Where was her home ?

Who was her father ?
 Who was her mother ?
 Had she a sister ?
 Had she a brother ?
 Or was there a dearer one
 Still, and a nearer one
 Yet, than all other ?

Alez ! for the rarity
 Of Christian charity
 Under the sun !
 Oh ! it was pitiful !
 Near a whole city full,
 Home he had none !

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly,
Feelings had changed :
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence ;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver ;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river :
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of the world !

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute man !
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can !

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !

Ere her limbs frigidly
 Stiffen too rigidly,
 Decently,—kindly,—
 Smoothe and compose them :
 And her eyes, close them,
 Staring so blindly !

Dreadfully staring
 Thro' muddy impurity,
 As when with the daring
 Last look of despairing,
 Fix'd on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
 Spurr'd by contumely,
 Cold inhumanity,
 Burning insanity,
 Into her rest.—
 Cross her hands humbly,
 As if praying dumbly,
 Over her breast !

Owning her weakness,
 Her evil behaviour,
 And leaving, with meekness,
 Her sins to her Saviour !

RALPH WALDO EMERSON 1803-1882

Uriel

IT tell in the ancient periods
 Which the brooding soul surveys,
 Or ever the wild Time coined itself
 Into calendar months and days.

This was the lapse of Uriel,
 Which in Paradise besell.

Once, among the Pleiads walking,
SAID overheard the young gods talking ;
And the treason, too long pent,
To his ears was evident.

The young deities discussed
Laws of form, and metre just,
Orb, quintessence, and sunbeams,
What subsisteth, and what seems.
One, with low tones that decide,
And doubt and reverend use defied,
With a look that solved the sphere,
And stirred the devils everywhere,
Gave his sentiment divine
Against the being of a line.

'Line in nature is not found ;
Unit and universe are round ;
In vain produced, all rays return ;
Evil will bless, and ice will burn.'
As Uriel spoke with piercing eye,
A shudder ran around the sky ;
The stern old war-gods shook their heads ;
The seraphs frowned from myrtle-beds ;
Seemed to the holy festival
The rash word boded ill to all ;
The balance-beam of Fate was bent ;
The bounds of good and ill were rent ;
Strong Hades could not keep his own,
But all slid to confusion.

A sad self-knowledge, withering, fell
On the beauty of Uriel ;
In heaven once eminent, the god
Withdrew, that hour, into his cloud ;
Whether doomed to long gyration
In the sea of generation,

SAID] a Persian poet.

Or by knowledge grown too bright
 To hit the nerve of feebler sight.
 Straightway, a forgetting wind
 Stole over the celestial kind,
 And their lips the secret kept,
 If in ashes the fire-seed slept.
 But now and then, truth-speaking things
 Shamed the angels' veiling wings ;
 And, shrilling from the solar course,
 Or from fruit of chemic force,
 Procession of a soul in matter,
 Or the speeding change of water,
 Or out of the good of evil born,
 Came Uriel's voice of cherub scorn,
 And a blush tinged the upper sky,
 And the gods shook, they knew not why.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING 1806-1861

The Cry of the Children

Φεῦ, φεῦ τί προσδέρκεσθέ μ' ὅμησιν, τέκνη;
Medea.

I

DO ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
 Ere the sorrow comes with years?
 They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
 And *that* cannot stop their tears.
 The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
 The young birds are chirping in the nest,
 The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
 The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
 But the young, young children, O my brothers,
 They are weeping bitterly!
 They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
 In the country of the free.

II

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,
 Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
 Which is lost in Long Ago ;
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
 The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
 The old hope is hardest to be lost.
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
 Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
 In our happy Fatherland ?

III

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
 And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
 Down the cheeks of infancy.
'Your old earth', they say, 'is very dreary ;'
 Our young feet', they say, 'are very weak !
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
 Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children ;
 For the outside earth is cold ;
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
 And the graves are for the old.'

IV

'True,' say the children, 'it may happen
 That we die before our time ;
Little Alice died last year—her grave is shapen
 Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her :
 Was no room for any work in the close clay !
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
 Crying, "Get up, little Alice ! it is day."

If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
 With your ear down, little Alice never cries ;
 Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
 For the smile has time for growing in her eyes :
 And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
 The shroud by the kirk-chime !
 It is good when it happens,' say the children,
 ' That we die before our time.'

v

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking
 Death in life, as best to have ;
 They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
 With a cerement from the grave.
 Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
 Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do ;
 Pluck you handfuls of the meadow cowslips pretty,
 Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through !
 But they answer, ' Are your cowslips of the meadows
 Like our weeds anear the mine ?
 Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
 From your pleasures fair and fine !

vi

' For oh,' say the children, ' we are weary,
 And we cannot run or leap ;
 If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
 To drop down in them and sleep.
 Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
 We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;
 And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
 The reddest flower would look as pale as snow ;
 For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
 Through the coal-dark, underground—
 Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
 In the factories, round and round.

VII

‘ For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—
Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn,—our head, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places :
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day, the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
“ O ye wheels ” (breaking out in a mad moaning),
“ Stop ! be silent for to-day ! ” ’

VIII

Aye ! be silent ! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth !
Let them touch each other’s hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth !
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals :
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels !—
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark ;
And the children’s souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

IX

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him and pray ;
So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,
Will bless them another day.
They answer, ‘ Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred ?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.

And we hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
 Strangers speaking at the door :
 Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
 Hears our weeping any more?

x

‘ Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
 And at midnight’s hour of harm,
 “ Our Father ”, looking upward in the chamber,
 We say softly for a charm.
 We know no other words, except “ Our Father ”,
 And we think that, in some pause of angels’ song,
 God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
 And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
 “ Our Father ! ” If He heard us, He would surely
 (For they call Him good and mild)
 Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
 “ Come and rest with Me, My child.”

xi

‘ But, no ! ’ say the children, weeping faster,
 ‘ He is speechless as a stone ;
 And they tell us, of His image is the master
 Who commands us to work on.
 Go to ! ’ say the children,—‘ up in Heaven,
 Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
 Do not mock us ; grief has made us unbelieving—
 We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.’
 Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
 O my brothers, what ye preach ?
 For God’s possible is taught by His world’s loving,
 And the children doubt of each.

xii

And well may the children weep before you !
 They are weary ere they run ;
 They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
 Which is brighter than the sun.

They know the grief of man, without its wisdom ;
 They sink in man's despair, without its calm ;
 Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
 Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—
 Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
 The harvest of its memories cannot reap,—
 Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
 Let them weep ! let them weep !

XIII

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
 And their look is dread to see,
 For they mind you of their angels in high places,
 With eyes turned on Deity !—
 ‘ How long,’ they say, ‘ how long, O cruel nation,
 Will you stand, to move the world, on a child’s heart,—
 Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
 And tread onward to your throne amid the mart ?
 Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
 And your purple shows your path !
 But the child’s sob in the silence curses deeper
 Than the strong man in his wrath.’

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON 1809-1892

The Lotos-Eaters

‘ COURAGE ! ’ he said, and pointed toward the land,
 ‘ This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.’
 In the afternoon they came unto a land
 In which it seemed always afternoon.
 All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
 Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
 Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;
 And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
 Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;
 And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
 They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
 From the inner land : far off, three mountain-tops,
 Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
 Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with showery drops,
 Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
 In the red West : thro' mountain clefts the dale
 Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
 Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
 And meadow, set with slender galingale ;
 A land where all things always seem'd the same !
 And round about the keel with faces pale,
 Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.
 Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
 To each, but whoso did receive of them,
 And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
 Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
 On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
 His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;
 And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
 And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
 Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;
 And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
 Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore
 Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
 Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
 Then some one said, 'We will return no more,'
 And all at once they sang, 'Our island home
 Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness ?
All things have rest : why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
' There is no joy but calm ! '
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things ?

III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow

Falls, and floats adown the air.
 Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days,
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
 Death is the end of life ; ah, why
 Should life all labour be ?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
 All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil ? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
 In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem
 Falling asleep in a half-dream !
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
 Eating the Lotos day by day,
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly

To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change ;
For surely now our household hearths are cold :
Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle ?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile :
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling

Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
 All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust
 is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge
 was seething free,
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains
 in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
 On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
 For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
 Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly
 curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
 world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps
 and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and
 praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong ;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil ;
 Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—
 down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and
oar ;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

Ulysses

I T little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known ; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met ;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains : but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things ; and vile it were

For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with
 me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ;
 Death closes all : but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
 The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;
One equal temper of heroic hearts
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

In the Valley of Caunterez

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the
night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away ;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

From 'In Memoriam'

THE BURIAL

I

FAIR ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain ; a favourable speed
Rusfile thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

Arthur] Arthur Henry Hallam, the dear friend of Tennyson's youth.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
 As our pure love, thro' early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow ;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
 My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run ;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

II

I hear the noise about thy keel ;
 I hear the bell struck in the night ;
 I see the cabin-window bright ;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
 And travell'd men from foreign lands ;
 And letters unto trembling hands ;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies : O to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
 The chalice of the grapes of God ;
 drains . . . God] takes the Sacrament.

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

III

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that reddens to the fall ;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

IV

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more ;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

Danube . . . Severn] Arthur Hallam died in Vienna; he was buried at Cliveden on the Severn.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;
 The salt sea-water passes by,
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,
 And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
 And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
 When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
 I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
 My deeper anguish also falls,
 And I can speak a little then.

REMINISCENCES

I

The path by which we twain did go,
 Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
 Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
 From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
 And, crown'd with all the season lent,
 From April on to April went,
 And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began
 To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
 As we descended following Hope,
 There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,
 And spread his mantle dark and cold,
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
 And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

[four sweet years] their four years of residence together at Trinity College, Cambridge.

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

II

Still onward winds the dreary way ;
I with it ; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

FIRST CHRISTMAS

The time draws near the birth of Christ :
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease,
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
 I almost wish'd no more to wake,
 And that my hold on life would break
 Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,
 For they controll'd me when a boy ;
 They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
 The merry merry bells of Yule.

FIRST SPRING

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Tho' always under alter'd skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
 The herald melodies of spring,
 But in the songs I love to sing
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits render'd free,
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

MOODS

I

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
 And tingle ; and the heart is sick,
 And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust ;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
A Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

II

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;
That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;
That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry.

III

Peace ; come away : the song of woe
 Is after all an earthly song :
 Peace ; come away : we do him wrong
 To sing so wildly : let us go.

Come ; let us go : your checks are pale ;
 But half my life I leave behind :
 Methinks my friend is richly shrined ;
 But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
 One set slow bell will seem to toll
 The passing of the sweetest soul
 That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
 Eternal greetings to the dead ;
 And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
 'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

SECOND CHRISTMAS

Again at Christmas did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas hearth ;
 The silent snow possess'd the earth,
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
 No wing of wind the region swept,
 But over all things brooding slept
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
 Again our ancient games had place,
 The mimic picture's breathing grace,
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
 No single tear, no mark of pain:
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?
O last regret, regret can die!
 No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
 Her deep relations are the same,
 But with long use her tears are dry.

SECOND SPRING

I

Dip down upon the northern shore,
 O sweet new-year delaying long;
 Thou doest expectant nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?
 Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
 The little speedwell's darling blue,
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
 That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

II

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
 Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
 And shadowing down the horned flood
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy breath
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odour streaming far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace'.

REMINISCENCES

I

I past beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the gown ;
 I roved at random thro' the town,
 And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes
 The storm their high-built organs make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
 The prophets blazon'd on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant shout,
 The measured pulse of racing oars
 Among the willows ; paced the shores
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same grey flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same ; and last
 Up that long walk of limes I past
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

the reverend walls] Trinity College, Cambridge.

Another name was on the door :

I linger'd ; all within was noise

Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band

Of youthful friends, on mind and art,

And labour, and the changing mart,

And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,

But send it slackly from the string ;

And one would pierce an outer ring,

And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he,

Would cleave the mark. A willing ear

We lent him. Who, but hung to hear

The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace

And music in the bounds of law,

To those conclusions when we saw

The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow

In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;

And over those ethereal eyes

The bar of Michael Angelo.

II

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor

Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright ;

And thou, with all thy breadth and height

Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

a band Of youthful friends] Tennyson and Hallam while at Cambridge belonged to a society called the Apostles. The bar of Michael Angelo] Eyebrows meeting.

How often, hither wandering down,
 My Arthur found your shadows fair,
 And shook to all the liberal air
 The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;
 He mixt in all our simple sports ;
 They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
 And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and mark
 The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
 The gust that round the garden flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,
 Or here she brought the harp and flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
 And break the livelong summer day
 With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
 Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
 Or touch'd the changes of the state,
 Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

happy sister} Hallam was engaged to one of Tennyson's sisters.

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,
' And merge ' he said ' in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,
Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,
And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

III

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry ;
And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;
And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn :
And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;
While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me and night,
 And in the house light after light
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
 Of that glad year which once had been,
 In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
 The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying change
 To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward back,
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from the past,
 And all at once it seem'd at last
 His living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd
 About empyreal heights of thought,
 And came on that which is, and caught
 The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
 The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
 The blows of Death. At length my trance
 Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame
 In matter-moulded forms of speech,
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach
 Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

‘ The dawn, the dawn,’ and died away ;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

THIRD CHRISTMAS

The time draws near the birth of Christ ;
The moon is hid, the night is still ;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

[not the bells I knew] By this time the Tennysons had left their old home in Lincolnshire.

THIRD SPRING

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares, and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
 To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too; and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

FINAL MOOD

I

Love is and was my Lord and King,
 And in his presence I attend
 To hear the tidings of my friend,
 Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
 And will be, tho' as yet I keep
 Within his court on earth, and sleep
 Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to place,
 And whispers to the worlds of space,
 In the deep night, that all is well.

II

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;
 I hear thee where the waters run ;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;
 My love is vaster passion now ;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice ;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice ;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

1811-1865

The Ballad of Bouillabaisse

A STREET there is in Paris famous,
 For which no rhyme our language yields,
 Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is—
 The New Street of the Little Fields ;
 And here's an inn, not rich and splendid,
 But still in comfortable case ;
 The which in youth I oft attended,
 To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is—
 A sort of soup or broth, or brew,
 Or hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes,
 That Greenwich never could outdo ;
 Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffern,
 Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace ;
 All these you eat at Terré's tavern,
 In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

Indeed, a rich and savoury stew 'tis ;
 And true philosophers, methinks,
 Who love all sorts of natural beauties,
 Should love good victuals and good drinks.
 And Cordelier or Benedictine
 Might gladly, sure, his lot embrace,
 Nor find a fast-day too afflicting
 Which served him up a Bouillabaisse.

I wonder if the house still there is ?
 Yes, here the lamp is, as before ;
 The smiling red-cheeked écaillère is
 Still opening oysters at the door.
 Is Terré still alive and able ?
 I recollect his droll grimace ;
 He'd come and smile before your table,
 And hope you liked your Bouillabaisse.

We enter—nothing 's changed or older.
 ‘ How 's Monsieur Terré, waiter, pray ? ’
 The waiter stares and shrugs his shoulder—
 ‘ Monsieur is dead this many a day.’
 ‘ It is the lot of saint and sinner,
 So honest Terré 's run his race.’
 ‘ What will Monsieur require for dinner ? ’
 ‘ Say, do you still cook Bouillabaisse ? ’
 ‘ Oh, oui, Monsieur,’ 's the waiter's answer ;
 ‘ Quel vin Monsieur désire-t-il ? ’
 ‘ Tell me a good one.—‘ That I can, Sir :
 The Chambertin with yellow seal.’

' So Terré 's gone,' I say, and sink in
 My old accustom'd corner-place ;
' He 's done with feasting and with drinking,
 With Burgundy and Bouillabaisse.'

My old accustom'd corner here is,
 The table still is in the nook ;
Ah ! vanish'd many a busy year is,
 This well-known chair since last I took.
When first I saw ye, *cari luoghi*,
 I'd scarce a beard upon my face,
And now a grizzled, grim old fogy,
 I sit and wait for Bouillabaisse.

Where are you, old companions trusty,
 Of early days, here met to dine ?
Come, waiter ! quick, a flagon crusty—
 I'll pledge them in the good old wine.
The kind old voices and old faces
 My memory can quick retrace ;
Around the board they take their places,
 And share the wine and Bouillabaisse.

There 's Jack has made a wondrous marriage ;
 There 's laughing Tom is laughing yet ;
There 's brave Augustus drives his carriage ;
 There 's poor old Fred in the Gazette ;
On James's head the grass is growing :
 Good Lord ! the world has wagged apace
Since here we set the Claret flowing,
 And drank, and ate the Bouillabaisse.

Ah me ! how quick the days are flitting !
 I mind me of a time that 's gone,
When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,
 In this same place—but not alone.

cari luoghi] dear scenes.

A fair young form was nestled near me,
 A dear, dear face looked fondly up,
 And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me.
 —There's no one now to share my cup.

• • • • •

I drink it as the Fates ordain it.
 Come, fill it, and have done with rhymes :
 Fill up the lonely glass, and drain it
 In memory of dear old times.
 Welcome the wine, whate'er the seal is ;
 And sit you down and say your grace
 With thankful heart, whate'er the meal is.
 —Here comes the smoking Bouillabaisse !

ROBERT BROWNING

1812-1889

The Flower's Name

I

HERE'S the garden she walked across,
 Arm in my arm, such a short while since :
 Hark, now I push its wicket, the moss
 Hinders the hinges and makes them wince !
 She must have reached this shrub ere she turned,
 As back with that murmur the wicket swung ;
 For she laid the poor snail, my chance foot spurned,
 To feed and forget it the leaves among.

II

Down this side of the gravel-walk
 She went while her robe's edge brushed the box :
 And here she paused in her gracious talk
 To point me a moth on the milk-white phlox.
 There's no one now] Thackeray's young wife went mad.

Roses, ranged in valiant row,
I will never think that she passed you by !
She loves you noble roses, I know ;
But yonder, see, where the rock-plants lie !

III

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,
Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim ;
Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,
Its soft meandering Spanish name :
What a name ! was it love, or praise ?
Speech half-asleep, or song half-awake ?
I must learn Spanish, one of these days,
Only for that slow sweet name's sake.

IV

Roses, if I live and do well,
I may bring her, one of these days,
To fix you fast with as fine a spell,
Fit you each with his Spanish phrase ;
But do not detain me now ; for she lingers
There, like sunshine over the ground,
And ever I see her soft white fingers
Searching after the bud she found.

V

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you grow not,
Stay as you are and be loved for ever !
Bud, if I kiss you 'tis that you blow not,
Mind, the shut pink mouth opens never !
For while thus it pouts, her fingers wrestle,
Twinkling the audacious leaves between,
Till round they turn and down they nestle—
Is not the dear mark still to be seen ?

VI

Where I find her not, beauties vanish ;
Whither I follow her, beauties flee ;
Is there no method to tell her in Spanish
June's twice June since she breathed it with me ?

Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,
 Treasure my lady's lightest footfall !
 —Ah, you may flout and turn up your faces—
 Roses, you are not so fair after all !

The Last Ride Together

I

I SAID—Then, Dearest, since 'tis so,
 Since now at length my fate I know,
 Since nothing all my love avails,
 Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
 Since this was written and needs must be—
 My whole heart rises up to bless
 Your name in pride and thankfulness !
 Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
 Only a memory of the same,
 —And this beside, if you will not blame,
 Your leave for one more last ride with me.

II

My mistress bent that brow of hers ;
 Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
 When pity would be softening through,
 Fixed me a breathing-while or two
 With life or death in the balance : right !
 The blood replenished me again ;
 My last thought was at least not vain :
 I and my mistress, side by side
 Shall be together, breathe and ride,
 So one day more am I deified—
 Who knows but the world may end to-night.

III

Hush ! if you saw some western cloud
 All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
 By many benedictions—sun's
 And moon's and evening-star's at once—

And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!

Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

IV

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out—a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.

What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated,—who can tell?
Where had I been now if the worst befell?

And here we are riding, she and I.

V

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,

As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought,—All labour, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsucces.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty Done, the Undone vast,
This Present of theirs with the hopeful Past!
I hoped she would love me: here we ride.

VI

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshy screen?

We ride and I see her bosom heave.
 There's many a crown for who can reach.
 Ten lines, a statesman's life in each !
 The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
 A soldier's doing ! what atones ?
 They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
 My riding is better, by their leave.

VII

What does it all mean, poet? well,
 Your brains beat into rhythm—you tell
 What we felt only; you expressed
 You hold things beautiful the best,
 And pace them in rhyme so, side by side,
 'Tis something, nay 'tis much—but then,
 Have you yourself what's best for men?
 Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
 Nearer one whit your own sublime
 Than we who never have turned a rhyme?
 Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

VIII

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
 A score of years to Art, her slave,
 And that's your Venus—whence we turn
 To yonder girl that fords the burn!

You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
 What, man of music, you, grown grey
 With notes and nothing else to say,
 Is this your sole praise from a friend,
 'Greatly his opera's strains intend,
 But in music we know how fashions end!'

I gave my youth—but we ride, in fine.

IX

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
 Proposed bliss here should sublimate
 My being; had I signed the bond—
 Still one must lead some life beyond,

—Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest—
Earth being so good, would Heaven seem best?
Now, Heaven and she are beyond this ride.

x

And yet—she has not spoke so long!
What if Heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And Heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli

I

I KNOW a Mount, the gracious Sun perceives
First when he visits, last, too, when he leaves
The world; and, vainly favoured, it repays
The day-long glory of his steadfast gaze
By no change of its large calm front of snow.
And underneath the Mount, a Flower I know,
He cannot have perceived, that changes ever
At his approach; and, in the lost endeavour
To live his life, has parted, one by one,
With all a flower's true graces, for the grace
Of being but a foolish mimic sun,
With ray-like florets round a disk-like face.

Tripoli; in Syria, not in Africa.

Q

Men nobly call by many a name the Mount
 As over many a land of theirs its large
 Calm front of snow like a triumphal targe
 Is reared, and still with old names, fresh names vic,
 Each to its proper praise and own account :
 Men call the Flower the Sunflower, sportively.

II

Oh, Angel of the East, one, one gold look
 Across the waters to this twilight nook,
 —The far sad waters, Angel, to this nook !

III

Dear Pilgrim, art thou for the East indeed ?
 Go ! Saying ever as thou dost proceed,
 That I, French Rudel, choose for my device
 A sunflower outspread like a sacrifice
 Before its idol. See ! These inexpert
 And hurried fingers could not fail to hurt
 The woven picture ; 'tis a woman's skill
 Indeed ; but nothing basfed me, so, ill
 Or well, the work is finished. Say, men feed
 On songs I sing, and therefore bask the bees
 On my flower's breast as on a platform broad :
 But, as the flower's concern is not for these
 But solely for the sun, so men applaud
 In vain this Rudel, he not looking here
 But to the East—the East ! Go, say this, Pilgrim dear !

A Toccata of Galuppi's

I

O H, Galuppi, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find !
 I can hardly misconceive you ; it would prove me
 deaf and blind ;
 But although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy
 mind !

French Rudel] Rudel was a famous troubadour.
 a musical composition. *Toccata*
Baldassaro Galuppi] a Venetian
composer.

II

Here you come with your old music, and here's all the
good it brings.

What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants
were the kings,

Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the
sea with rings?

III

Ay, because the sea's the street there; and 'tis arched
by . . . what you call

. . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they kept
the carnival:

I was never out of England—it's as if I saw it all!

IV

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was
warm in May?

Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to mid-
day

When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do
you say?

V

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red,—
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower on
its bed,

O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man might
base his head?

VI

Well, (and it was graceful of them) they'd break talk off
and afford

—She, to bite her mask's black velvet, he, to finger on
his sword,

While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at the clavi-
chord?

VII

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished,
 sigh on sigh,
 Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions—‘Must we die?’
 Those commiserating sevenths—‘Life might last! we can
 but try!’

VIII

‘Were you happy?’—‘Yes.’—‘And are you still as
 happy?’—‘Yes. And you?’
 —‘Then, more kisses!’—‘Did I stop them, when a
 million seemed so few?’
 Hark! the dominant’s persistence, till it must be an-
 swered to!

IX

So an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised you,
 I dare say!
 ‘Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave
 and gay!
 I can always leave off talking, when I hear a master play.’

X

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due time,
 one by one,
 Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds
 as well undone,
 Death came tacitly and took them where they never see
 the sun.

XI

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand
 nor swerve,
 While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close
 reserve,
 In you come with your cold music, till I creep thro' every
 nerve.

xii

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house
was burned—

‘Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what
Venice earned !

The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a soul can be
discerned.

xiii

Yours for instance, you know physics, something of
geology,

Mathematics are your pastime ; souls shall rise in their
degree ;

Butterflies may dread extinction,—you’ll not die, it can-
not be !

xiv

As for Venice and its people, merely born to bloom and
drop,

Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly
were the crop :

What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to
stop ?

xv

‘Dust and ashes !’ So you creak it, and I want the heart
to scold.

Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what’s become
of all the gold

Used to hang and brush their bosoms ? I feel chilly and
grown old.

May and Death

I

I WISH that when you died last May,
Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of spring’s delightful things ;
Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too.

II

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps !
 There must be many a pair of friends
 Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
 Moon-births and the long evening-ends.

III

So, for their sakes, be May still May !
 Let their new time, as mine of old,
 Do all it did for me : I bid
 Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

IV

Only, one little sight, one plant,
 Woods have in May, that starts up green
 Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
 Is spring's blood, split its leaves between,—

V

That, they might spare ; a certain wood
 Might miss the plant ; their loss were small :
 But I,—whene'er the leaf grows there,
 Its drop comes from my heart, that's all.

*The Patriot**An Old Story*

I

IT was roses, roses, all the way,
 With myrtle mixed in my path like mad :
 The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
 The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
 A year ago on this very day !

II

The air broke into a mist with bells,
 The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
 Had I said, ‘ Good folk, mere noise repels—
 But give me your sun from yonder skies ! ’
 They had answered, ‘ And afterward, what else ? ’

III

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep !
Nought man could do, have I left undone :
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

IV

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set ;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

V

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind ;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

VI

Thus I entered, and thus I go !
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
'Paid by the World,—what dost thou owe
Me ?' God might question : now instead,
'Tis God shall repay ! I am safer so.

*My Last Duchess**Ferrara*

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive ; I call
That piece a wonder, now : Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her ? I said
'Frà Pandolf' by design, for never read

Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
 How such a glance came there ; so, not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek : perhaps
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say ' Her mantle laps
 Over my Lady's wrist too much ', or ' Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat ' ; such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
 A heart . . . how shall I say ? . . . too soon made glad,
 Too easily impressed ; she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
 Sir, 'twas all one ! My favour at her breast,
 The dropping of the daylight in the West,
 The bough of cherries some officious fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
 She rode with round the terrace—all and each
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good ; but thanked
 Somehow . . . I know not how . . . as if she ranked
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
 This sort of trifling ? Even had you skill
 In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say ' Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me ; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark '—and if she let
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
 —E'en then would be some stooping, and I chuse
 Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt,

Whene'er I passed her ; but who passed without
Much the same smile ? This grew ; I gave commands ;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise ? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed ;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, Sir ! Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

Abt Vogler

(*After he has been extemporizing upon the Musical Instrument
of his invention*)

I

WOULD that the structure brave, the manifold music
I build,

Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when
Solomon willed

Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,
Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and of aim,

Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep
removed,—

Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable
Name,

And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess
he loved !

II

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of
mine,

This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned
to raise !

Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and now combine,

Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise !

And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to hell,

Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my palace well,

Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

III

And another would mount and march, like the excellent minion he was,

Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with many a crest,

Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,

Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest :

For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,
When a great illumination surprises a festal night—
Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to spire)

Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul was in sight.

IV

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain, to match man's birth,

Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I ;
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,

As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale the sky :

Novel splendours burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt with mine,

Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its wandering star ;

Meteor-moons, balls of blaze : and they did not pale nor
pine,
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more
near nor far.

V

Nay more ; for there wanted not who walked in the glare
and glow,

Presences plain in the place ; or, fresh from the Proto-
plast,

Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should
blow,

Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking
at last ;

Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the
body and gone,

But were back once more to breathe in an old world
worth their new :

What never had been, was now ; what was, as it shall be
anon ;

And what is,—shall I say, matched both? for I was
made perfect too.

VI

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of
my soul,

All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed
visibly forth,

All through music and me! For think, had I painted
the whole,

Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so
wonder-worth :

Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect proceeds
from cause,

Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale
is told ;

It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled :—

VII

But here is the singer of God, a flash of the will that can,
 Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they
 are !

And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to
 man,

That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound,
 but a star.

Consider it well : each tone of our scale in itself is nought ;
 It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is
 said :

Give it to me to use ! I mix it with two in my thought ;
 And, there ! Ye have heard and seen : consider and
 bow the head !

VIII

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared ;
 Gone ! and the good tears start, the praises that come
 too slow ;

For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he feared,
 That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing was
 to go.

Never to be again ! But many more of the kind
 As good, nay, better perchance : is this your comfort
 to me ?

To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind
 To the same, same self, same love, same God : ay, what
 was, shall be.

IX

Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, the ineffable
 Name ?

Builder and maker, Thou, of houses not made with
 hands !

What, have fear of change from Thee who art ever the
 same ?

Doubt that Thy power can fill the heart that Thy
 power expands ?

There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live
as before ;

The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;
What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much
good more ;

On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a perfect
round.

x

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall
exist ;

Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor
power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the
melodist

When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too
hard,

The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;

Enough that He heard it once : we shall hear it by
and by.

xi

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fullness of the days ? Have we withered or
agonized ?

Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might
issue thence ?

Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should
be prized ?

Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and
woe :

But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear ;
The rest may reason and welcome : 'tis we musicians
know.

xii

Well, it is earth with me ; silence resumes her reign :
 I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.
 Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
 Sliding by semitones, till I sink to the minor,—yes,
 And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
 Surveying a while the heights I rolled from into the
 deep ;
 Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place
 is found,
 The C Major of this life : so, now I will try to sleep.

Echetlos

HERE is a story shall stir you ! Stand up, Greeks dead
 and gone,
 Who breasted, beat Barbarians, stemmed Persia rolling on,
 Did the deed and saved the world, for the day was
 Marathon !

No man but did his manliest, kept rank and fought away
 In his tribe and file : up, back, out, down—was the spear-
 arm play :
 Like a wind-whipt branchy wood, all spear-arms a-swing
 that day !

But one man kept no rank and his sole arm plied no spear,
 As a flashing came and went, and a form i' the van, the
 rear,
 Brightened the battle up, for he blazed now there, now
 here.

Nor helmed nor shielded, he ! but, a goat-skin all his
 wear,
 Like a tiller of the soil, with a clown's limbs broad and
 bare,
 Went he ploughing on and on : he pushed with a plough-
 man's share.

Did the weak mid-line give way, as tunnies on whom the shark

Precipitates his bulk ? did the right-wing halt when, stark
On his heap of slain lay stretched Kallimachos Polemarch ?

Did the steady phalanx falter? To the rescue, at the need,

The clown was ploughing Persia, clearing Greek earth of weed,

As he routed through the Sakian and rooted up the Mede.

But the deed done, battle won,—nowhere to be descried
On the meadow, by the stream, at the marsh—look far
and wide

From the foot of the mountain, no, to the last blood-
plashed seaside,—

Not anywhere on view blazed the large limbs thonged and brown,

Shearing and clearing still with the share before which—
down

To the dust went Persia's pomp, as he ploughed for
Greece, that clown !

How spake the Oracle? ‘ Care for no name at all !

Say but just this : “ We praise one helpful whom we call
The Holder of the Ploughshare.” The great deed ne'er
grows small.’

Not the great name! Sing—woe for the great name
Miltiadés

And its end at Paros isle ! Woe for Themistokles
—Satrap in Sardis court ! Name not the clown like
these !

Hoarse laughed the jailor grim : ' Shall I be won to hear ;
 Dost think, fond, dreaming wretch, that I shall grant thy
 prayer ? '

Or, better still, wilt melt my master's heart with groans ?
 Ah ! sooner might the sun thaw down these granite
 stones.

' My master's voice is low, his aspect bland and kind,
 But hard as hardest flint the soul that lurks behind ;
 And I am rough and rude, yet not more rough to see
 Than is the hidden ghost that has its home in me.'

About her lips there played a smile of almost scorn.

' My friend,' she gently said, ' you have not heard me
 mourn ; '

When you my kindred's lives, my lost life, can restore,
 Then may I weep and sue,—but never, friend, before !

' Still, let my tyrants know, I am not doomed to wear
 Year after year in gloom, and desolate despair ;
 A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,
 And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

' He comes with western winds, with evening's wandering
 airs,
 With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest
 stars.

Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,
 And visions rise, and change, that kill me with desire.

' Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,
 When Joy grew mad with awe, at counting future tears.
 When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,
 I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunder-
 storm.

' But, first, a hush of peace—a soundless calm descends ;
 The struggle of distress, and fierce impatience ends ;
 Mute music soothes my breast—unuttered harmony,
 That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

'Then dawns the Invisible ; the Unseen its truth reveals ;
 My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels :
 Its wings are almost free—its home, its harbour found,
 Measuring the gulf, it stoops and dares the final bound.

'Oh ! dreadful is the check—intense the agony—
 When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see ;
 When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again ;
 The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

'Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less ;
 The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless ;
 And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine,
 If it but herald death, the vision is divine !'

She ceased to speak, and we, unanswering, turned to go—
 We had no further power to work the captive woe :
 Her cheek, her gleaming eye, declared that man had given
 A sentence, unapproved, and overruled by Heaven.

Last Lines

NO coward soul is mine,
 No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere :
 I see Heaven's glories shine,
 And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
 Almighty, ever-present Deity !
 Life—that in me has rest,
 As I—undying Life—have power in thee !

Vain are the thousand creeds
 That move men's hearts : unutterably vain ;
 Worthless as withered weeds,
 O idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thine infinity ;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is no room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void :
Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

W A L T W H I T M A N

1819-1892

Pioneers! O Pioneers!

COME my tan-faced children,
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes?
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

For we cannot tarry here,
We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of
danger,
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

O you youths, Western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and
friendship,
Plain I see you Western youths, see you tramping with
the foremost,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Have the elder races halted?
 Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there
 beyond the seas?
 We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the
 lesson,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

All the past we leave behind,
 We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
 Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labour and
 the march,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

We detachments steady throwing,
 Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains
 steep,
 Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the
 unknown ways,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

We prinaeval forests felling,
 We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the
 mines within,
 We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil up-
 heaving,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Colorado men are we,
 From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the
 high plateaus,
 From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting
 trail we come,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,
 Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the
 continental blood intervein'd,
 All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all
 the Northern,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

O restless restless race !
O beloved race in all ! O my breast aches with tender
love for all !
O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Raise the mighty mother mistress,
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry
mistress, (bend your heads all,)
Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive,
weapon'd mistress,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

See my children, resolute children,
By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or
falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us
urging,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

On and on the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead
quickly fill'd,
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and
never stopping,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

O to die advancing on !
Are there some of us to droop and die ? has the hour
come ?
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the
gap is fill'd,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

All the pulses of the world,
Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement
beat,
Holding single or together, steady moving to the front,
all for us,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,
 All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work,
 All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with
 their slaves,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

All the hapless silent lovers,
 All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the
 wicked,
 All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the
 dying,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

I too with my soul and body,
 We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,
 Through these shores amid the shadows, with the appari-
 tions pressing,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Lo, the darting bowling orb !
 Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns and
 planets,
 All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

These are of us, they are with us,
 All for primal needed work, while the followers there in
 embryo wait behind,
 We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel
 clearing,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

O you daughters of the West !
 O you young and elder daughters ! O you mothers and
 you wives !
 Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Minstrels latent on the prairies !

(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have
done your work,)

Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and
tramp amid us,

Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Not for delectations sweet,

Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the
studious,

Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame
enjoyment,

Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Do the feasters glutinous feast ?

Do the corpulent sleepers sleep ? have they lock'd and
bolted doors ?

Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Has the night descended ?

Was the road of late so toilsome ? did we stop discouraged
nodding on our way ?

Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause
oblivious,

Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Till with sound of trumpet,

Far, far off the daybreak call—hark ! how loud and clear
I hear it wind,

Swift ! to the head of the army !—swift ! spring to your
places,

Pioneers ! O pioneers !

The Artilleryman's Vision

WHILE my wife at my side lies slumbering, and the
wars are over long,

And my head on the pillow rests at home, and the vacant
midnight passes,

And through the stillness, through the dark, I hear, just
hear, the breath of my infant,
There in the room as I wake from sleep this vision presses
upon me ;
The engagement opens there and then in fantasy unreal,
The skirmishers begin, they crawl cautiously ahead, I hear
the irregular snap ! snap !
I hear the sounds of the different missiles, the short *t-h-t !*
t-h-t ! of the rifle-balls,
I see the shells exploding leaving small white clouds, I hear
the great shells shrieking as they pass,
The grape like the hum and whirr of wind through the
trees, (tumultuous now the contest rages,)
All the scenes at the batteries rise in detail before me
again,
The crashing and smoking, the pride of the men in their
pieces,
The chief-gunner ranges and sights his piece and selects
a fuse of the right time,
After firing I see him lean aside and look eagerly off to
note the effect ;
Elsewhere I hear the cry of a regiment charging, (the
young colonel leads himself this time with brandish'd
sword,)
I see the gaps cut by the enemy's volleys, (quickly fill'd
up, no delay,)
I breathe the suffocating smoke, then the flat clouds hover
low concealing all ;
Now a strange lull for a few seconds, not a shot fired on
either side,
Then resumed the chaos louder than ever, with eager
calls and orders of officers,
While from some distant part of the field the wind wafts
to my ears a shout of applause, (some special success,)
And ever the sound of the cannon far or near, (rousing
even in dreams a devilish exultation and all the old
mad joy in the depths of my soul,)

And ever the hastening of infantry shifting positions,
 batteries, cavalry, moving hither and thither,
 (The falling, dying, I heed not, the wounded dripping
 and red I heed not, some to the rear are hobbling,) Grime, heat, rush, aide-de-camps galloping by or on a full run,
 With the patter of small arms, the warning *s-s-t* of the rifles, (these in my vision I hear or see,) And bombs bursting in air, and at night the vari-colour'd rockets.

Come up from the Fields Father

COME up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete,
 And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
 Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
 Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in the moderate wind,
 Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the trellis'd vines,
 (Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?
 Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)

Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,
 Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
 But now from the fields come father, come at the daughter's call,
 And come to the entry mother, to the front door come right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps
trembling,

She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,

O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken
mother's soul!

All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches
the main words only,

Sentences broken, gunshot wound in the breast, cavalry
shrimish, taken to hospital,

At present low, but will soon be better.

Ah now the single figure to me,

Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and
farms,

Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.

*Grieve not so, dear mother, (the just-grown daughter speaks
through her sobs,*

The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd,)
See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.

Alas poor boy, he will never be better, (nor maybe needs
to be better, that brave and simple soul,)

While they stand at home at the door he is dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,

She with thin form presently drest in black,

By day her meals untouched, then at night fitfully
sleeping, often waking,

In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep
longing,

O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life
escape and withdraw,

To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

Thyrsis

A MONODY, TO COMMEMORATE THE AUTHOR'S FRIEND, ARTHUR
HUGH CLOUGH, WHO DIED AT FLORENCE, 1861

Thus yesterday, to-day, to-morrow come,
They hustle one another and they pass ;
But all our hustling morrows only make
The smooth to-day of God.

From Lucretius, an unpublished Tragedy.

HOW changed is here each spot man makes or fills !
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same ;
The village-street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks ;
Are ye too changed, ye hills ?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays !
Here came I often, often, in old days ;
Thyrsis and I ; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Up past the wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames ?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful
Thames ?—

This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air ; leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers ;
And that sweet City with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night !
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim ;
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour,
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.

That single elm-tree bright
 Against the west—I miss it ! is it gone ?
 We prized it dearly ; while it stood, we said,
 Our friend, the Scholar-Gipsy, was not dead ;
 While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here !
 But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick ;
 And with the country-folk acquaintance made
 By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
 Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd.

Ah me ! this many a year
 My pipe is lost, my shepherd's-holiday !
 Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
 Into the world and wave of men depart ;
 But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest.
 He loved each simple joy the country yields,
 He loved his mates ; but yet he could not keep,
 For that a shadow lower'd on the fields,
 Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.

Some life of men unblest
 He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head.
 He went ; his piping took a troubled sound
 Of storms that rage outside our happy ground ;
 He could not wait their passing, he is dead !

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
 When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
 Before the roses and the longest day—
 When garden-walks, and all the grassy floor,
 With blossoms, red and white, of fallen May,

And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
 So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
 From the wet field, through the wet garden-trees,
 Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze :
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I.

the Scholar-Gipsy] See Arnold's poem of that name.

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go ?
 Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
 Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
 Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
 Sweet-William with its homely cottage-smell,
 And stocks in fragrant blow ;
 Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
 And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
 And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
 And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not ! light comer, he is flown !
 What matters it ? next year he will return,
 And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
 With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
 And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
 And scent of hay new-mown.
 But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see !
 See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
 And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—
 For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee

Alack, for Corydon no rival now !—
 But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
 Some good survivor with his flute would go,
 Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate,
 And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
 And relax Pluto's brow,
 And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
 Of Proserpine, among whose crownèd hair
 Are flowers, first open'd on Sicilian air,
 And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
 When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine !
 For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
 She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,

Bion] a Greek pastoral poet, for whom Moschus wrote a lament.

She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
 Each rose with blushing face ;
 She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
 But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard !
 Her foot the Cummer cowslips never starr'd !
 And we should tease her with our plaint in vain.

Well ! wind-dispers'd and vain the words will be,
 Yet, Thysir, let me give my grief its hour
 In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill !
 Who, if not I, for questing here hath power ?
 I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
 I know the Fyfield tree,
 I know what white, what purple fritillaries
 The grassy harvest of the river-fields.
 Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields.
 And what sedg'd brooks are Thames's tributaries :
 I know these slopes : who knows them if not I ?—
 But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
 With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd
 trees,
 Where thick the cowslips grew, and, far descried,
 High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
 Hath since our day put by
 The coronals of that forgotten time.
 Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's
 team,
 And only in the hidden brookside gleam
 Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.
 Where is the girl, who, by the boatman's door,
 Above the locks, above the boating throng,
 Unmoor'd our skiff, when, through the Wytham flats,
 Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among,
 And darting swallows, and light water-gnats,
 We track'd the shy Thames shore ?

[Enna] in Sicily, where Proserpine was carried off to Hades.

Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heav'd the river-grass,
Stood with suspended seythe to see us pass?—
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well.

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.

I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with
grey;

I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
To the unpræcis'd eye of sanguine youth;

And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!

Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall.
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as weleome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland liath a sudden loss
Of quiet;—Look! adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they
come—

Quick, let me fly, and cross
Into yon further field!—'Tis done; and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

That lonely Tree against the western sky.

Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee !

Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemones in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still ; then why not me ?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Slow to illumine ; and I seek it too.

This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew ;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold.

But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired ;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone ;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wert bound,
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour ;
Men gave thee nothing, but this happy quest,
If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.

And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime ;
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone,
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
It fail'd, and thou wast mute ;
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Lest human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here !
 'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
 Thyrsis, in reach of sheep-bells is my home !
 Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying
 roar,
 Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
 To chase fatigue and fear :
Why faintest thou ? I wander'd till I died.
Roam on ! the light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof ? Our Tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside.

GEORGE MEREDITH

1828-1909

A Ballad of Past Meridian

LAST night, returning from my twilight walk,
 I met the grey mist, Death, whose eyeless brow
 Was bent on me, and from his hand of chalk
 He reached me flowers as from a withered bough.
 Oh Death, what bitter nosegays givest thou !

Death said, 'I gather,' and pursued his way.
 Another stood by me, a shape in stone,
 Sword-hacked and iron-stained, with breasts of clay,
 And metal veins, that something fiery shone.
 Oh Life, how naked and how hard when known !

Life said, 'As thou hast carved me, such am I.'
 Then Memory, like the night-jar on the pine,
 And sightless Hope, a woodlark in night sky,
 Sang notes of life and death till night's decline.
 Of death, of life, those inwound notes are mine.

D. G. ROSETTI

1838-1892

*The Last Three from Trafalgar**At the Anniversary Banquet, 21st October 187**

IN grappled ships around The Victory,
 Three boys did England's Duty with stout cheer,
 While one dread truth was kept from every ear,
 More dire than deafening fire that churned the sea :
 For in the flag-ship's weltering cockpit, he
 Who was the Battle's Heart without a peer,
 He who had seen all fearful sights save Fear,
 Was passing from all life save Victory.

And round the old memorial board to-day,
 Three greybeards—each a warworn British Tar—
 View through the mist of years that hour afar :
 Who soon shall greet, 'mid memories of fierce fray,
 The impassioned soul which on its radiant way
 Soared through the fiery cloud of Trafalgar.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

1837-1909

Chorus from Atalanta

WHEN the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
 The mother of months in meadow or plain
 Fills the shadows and windy places
 With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain ;
 And the brown bright nightingale amorous
 Is half assuaged for Itylus,
 For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
 The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,

Maiden most perfect, lady of light,

With a noise of winds and many rivers,

With a clamour of waters, and with might ;

Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,

Over the splendour and speed of thy feet ;

For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,

Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,

Fold our hands round her knees, and cling ?

O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,

Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring !

For the stars and the winds are unto her

As raiment, as songs of the harp-player ;

For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,

And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,

And all the season of snows and sins ;

The days dividing lover and lover,

The light that loses, the night that wins ;

And time remember'd is grief forgotten,

And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,

And in green underwood and cover

Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,

Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,

The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes

From leaf to flower and flower to fruit ;

And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,

And the oat is heard above the lyre,

And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes

The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,

Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,

Follows with dancing and fills with delight

The Maenad and the Bassarid ;

And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
 The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
 Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes ;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
 Her bright breast shortening into sighs ;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
 The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

Chorus from Erechtheus

SUN, that hast lightened and loosed by thy might
Ocean and Earth from the lordship of night,
Quicken with vision his eye that was veiled,
Freshening the force in her heart that had failed,
That sister fettered and blinded brother
Should have sight by thy grace and delight of each other,
 Behold now and see
 What profit is given them of thee ;
What wrath has enkindled with madness of mind
Her limbs that were bounden, his face that was blind,
To be locked as in wrestle together, and lighten
With fire that shall darken thy fire in the sky,
Body to body, and eye against eye
 In a war against kind,
Till the bloom of her fields and her high hills whiten
 With the foam of his waves more high.
For the sea-marks set to divide of old
The kingdoms to Ocean and Earth assigned,
The hoar sea-fields from the cornfields' gold,
His wine-bright waves from her vineyards' fold,

Frail forces we find
 To bridle the spirit of Gods or bind
 Till the heat of their hearts wax cold.
 But the peace that was stablished between them to stand
 Is rent now in twain by the strength of his hand
 Who stirs up the storm of his sons overbold
 To pluck from fight what he lost of right,
 By council and judgement of Gods that spake
 And gave great Pallas the strife's fair stake,
 The lordship and love of the lovely land,
 The grace of the town that hath on it for crown
 But a headband to wear
 Of violets one-hued with her hair :
 For the vales and the green high places of earth
 Hold nothing so fair,
 And the depths of the sea bear no such birth
 Of the manifold births they bear.
 Too well, too well was the great stake worth
 A strife divine for the Gods to judge,
 A crowned God's triumph, a foiled God's grudge,
 Though the loser be strong and the victress wise
 Who played long since for so large a prize,
 The fruitful immortal anointed adored
 Dear city of men without master or lord,
 Fair fortress and fostress of sons born free,
 Who stand in her sight and in thine, O sun,
 Slaves of no man, subjects of none ;
 A wonder enthroned on the hills and sea,
 A maiden crowned with a fourfold glory
 That none from the pride of her head may rend,
 Violet and olive-leaf purple and hoary,
 Song-wreath and story the fairest of fame,
 Flowers that the winter can blast not or bend ;
 A light upon earth as the sun's own flame,
 A name as his name,
 Athens, a praise without end.

THOMAS HARDY

b. 1840

Friends Beyond

WILLIAM DEWY, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow
 late at plough,
 Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,
 And the Squire, and Lady Susan, lie in Mellstock
 churchyard now—

'Gone,' I call them, gone for good, that group of local
 hearts and heads;

Yet at mothy curfew-tide,
 And at midnight when the noon-heat breathes it back
 from walls and leads,

They've a way of whispering to me—fellow-wight who
 yet abide—

In the muted, measured note
 Of a ripple under archways, or a lone cave's stillicide:

'We have triumph'd: this achievement turns the bane
 to antidote,

Unsuccesses to success,
 Many thought-worn eyes and morrows to a morrow free
 of thought.

'No more need we corn and clothing, feel of old terres-
 trial stress;

Chill detraction stirs no sigh;
 Fear of death has even bygone us: death gave all that
 we possess.'

W. D. 'Ye mid burn the old bass-viol that set I such
 value by.'

Squire. 'You may hold the manse in fee,
 You may wed my spouse, may let my children's memory
 of me die.'

Lady. ‘ You may have my rich brocades, my laces ; take
each household key ;
Ransack coffer, desk, bureau ;
Quiz the few poor treasures hid there, con the letters
kept by me.’

Far. ‘ Ye mid zell my favourite heifer, ye mid let the
charlock grow,
Foul the grinterns, give up thrift.’

Wife. ‘ If ye break my best blue china, children, I shan’t
care or ho.’

All. ‘ We’ve no wish to hear the tidings, how the people’s
fortunes shift ;

What your daily doings are ;
Who are wedded, born, divided ; if your lives beat slow
or swift.

‘ Curious not the least are we if our intents you make
or mar,

If you quire to our old tune,
If the City stage still passes, if the weirs still roar afar.’

—Thus, with very gods’ composure, freed those crosses
late and soon

Which, in life, the Trine allow
(Why, none witteth), and ignoring all that haps beneath
the moon,

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late
at plough,

Robert’s kin, and John’s, and Ned’s,
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, murmur mildly to
me now.

There is a hill beside the silver Thames

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,
Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine :
And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

Straight trees in every place
Their thick tops interlace,
And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows :
His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,
Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

His winter floods lay bare
The stout roots in the air :
His summer streams are cool, when they have playcd
Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,
And hides it from the meadow, where in peace
The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
Robbing the golden market of the bees :

And laden barges float
By banks of myosote ;
And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys
Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool
Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass
The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,
And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass ;

Where spreading crowfoot mars
The drowning nenuphars,
Waving the tassels of her silken grass
Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
 Not the white water-lily spoked with gold ;
 Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows
 On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold :

Yet should her roots but try
 Within these deeps to lie,
 Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold
 Her waxen head so high.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook
 Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree
 Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,
 Forgetting soon his pride of fishery ;

And dreams, or falls asleep,
 While curious fishes peep
 About his nibbled bait, or scornfully
 Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,
 In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care
 Upon a staff propping his weary knees,
 May by the pathway of the forest fare :

As from a buried day
 Across the mind will stray
 Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware
 He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
 Whether he bathe at morning in the stream :
 Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe
 The meadows, busy with a blurring steam ;
 Or watch, as fades the light,
 The gibbous moon grow bright,
 Until her magic rays dance in a dream,
 And glorify the night.

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames ?
 O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow !
 O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,
 No sharer of my secret I allow :

Lest ere I come the while
Strange feet your shades defile ;
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow
Within your guardian isle.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON 1850-1894

Christmas at Sea

THE sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand ;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand,
The wind was a nor'-wester, blowing squally off the sea ;
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.
They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day ;
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.
All day we tack'd and tack'd between the South Head
and the North ;
All day we haul'd the frozen sheets, and got no further forth ;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tack'd from head to head.
We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race
roar'd ;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head
close aboard ;
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers
running high,
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against
his eye.

'The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam ;
The good red fires were burning bright in every longshore home ;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volley'd out ;
And I vow we sniff'd the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer ;
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blessed Christmas morn,
And the house above the coastguard's was the house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair ;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves
Go dancing round the china-plates that stand upon the shelves !

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea ;
And O the wicked fool I seem'd, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessed Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall,
'All hands to loose top-gallant sails !' I heard the captain call.
'By the Lord, she'll never stand it,' our first mate Jackson cried,
.... 'It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson,' he replied.

She stagger'd to her bearings, but her sails were new
and good,
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she
understood.
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,
We clear'd the weary headland and pass'd below the light.
And they heav'd a mighty breath, every soul on board
but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea ;
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were
growing old.

SIR WILLIAM WATSON

b. 1858

The Father of the Forest

OLD emperor Yew, fantastic sire,
Girt with thy guard of dotard kings,—
What ages hast thou seen retire
 Into the dusk of alien things?
What mighty news hath stormed thy shade,
Of armies perished, realms unmade?

Already wast thou great and wise,
 And solemn with exceeding eld,
On that proud morn when England's eyes,
 Wet with tempestuous joy, beheld
Round her rough coasts the thundering main
Strown with the ruined dream of Spain.

Hardly thou count'st them long ago,
 The warring faiths, the wavering land,
The sanguine sky's delirious glow,
 And Cranmer's scorched, uplifted hand.
the ruined dream of Spain] the wrecked Armada.

Wailed not the woods their task of shame,
Doomed to provide the insensate flame?

Mourned not the rumouring winds, when she,
 The sweet queen of a tragic hour,
Crowned with her snow-white memory
 The crimson legend of the Tower?
Or when a thousand witcheries lay
Felled with one stroke, at Fotheringay?

Ah, thou hast heard the iron tread
 And clang of many an armoured age,
And well recall'st the famous dead,
 Captains or counsellors brave or sage,
Kings that on kings their myriads hurled,
 Ladies whose smile embroiled the world.

Rememberest thou the perfect knight,
The soldier, courtier, bard in one,
Sidney, that pensive Hesper-light
O'er Chivalry's departed sun?
Knew'st thou the virtue, sweetness, lore,
Whose nobly hapless name was More?

The roystering prince, that afterward
Belied his madcap youth, and proved
A greatly simple warrior lord
Such as our warrior fathers loved—
Lives he not still? for Shakespeare sings
The last of our adventurer kings.

His battles o'er, he takes his ease,
Glory put by, and sceptred toil.
Round him the carven centuries
Like forest branches arch and coil.
In that dim fane, he is not sure
Who lost or won at Azincour !

sweet queen] Lady Jane Grey. a thousand witcheries]
Mary Queen of Scots. The roystering prince] Henry V.

Roofed by the mother minster vast
That guards Augustine's rugged throne,
The darling of a knightly Past
Sleeps in his bed of sculptured stone,
And flings, o'er many a warlike tale,
The shadow of his dusky mail.

The monarch who, albeit his crown
Graced an august and sapient head,
Rode roughshod to a stained renown
O'er Wallace and Llewellyn dead,
And eased at last by Solway strand
His restless heart and ruthless hand;

Or that disastrous king on whom
Fate, like a tempest, early fell,
And the dark secret of whose doom
The Keep of Pomfret kept full well,
Or him whose lightly leaping words
On Becket drew the dastard swords;

Or Eleanor's undaunted son,
That, starred with idle glory, came
Bearing from 'leaguered Ascalon
The barren splendour of his fame,
And, vanquished by an unknown bow,
Lies vainly great at Fontevraud:

Or him, the footprints of whose power
Made mightier whom he overthrew;
A man built like a mountain-tower,
A fortress of heroic thew;
The Conqueror, in our soil who set
This stem of Kinghood flowering yet;—

the mother minster] Canterbury Cathedral. The darling]
The Black Prince. The monarch] Edward I. that
disastrous king] Richard II. Or him . . .] Henry II.
Eleanor's undaunted son] Richard I.

These or the living fame of these,
 Perhaps thou minglest—who shall say?—
 With thrice remoter memories,
 And phantoms of the mistier day;
 Long ere the tanner's daughter's son
 From Harold's hands this realm had won.

What years are thine, not mine to guess!
 The stars look youthful, thou being by;
 Youthful the sun's glad-heartedness;
 Witless of time the unageing sky!
 And these dim-groping roots around
 So deep a human Past are wound,

That, musing in thy shade, for me
 The tidings scarce would strangely fall
 Of fair-haired despots of the sea
 Scaling our eastern island-wall,
 From their long ship of norland pine,
 Their 'surf-deer', driven o'er wilds of brine.

Nay, hid by thee from Summer's gaze
 That seeks in vain this couch of loam,
 I should behold, without amaze,
 Camped on yon down the hosts of Rome,
 Nor start though English woodlands heard
 The self-same mandatory word

As by the Cataracts of the Nile
 Marshalled the legions long ago,
 Or where the lakes are one blue smile
 'Neath pageants of Helvetian snow,
 Or 'mid the Syrian sands that lie
 Sick of the day's great tearless eye,

Or on barbaric plains afar,
 Where, under Asia's fevering ray,
 The long lines of imperial war
 O'er Tigris passed, and with dismay

In fanged and iron deserts found
Embattled Persia closing round,
And 'mid their eagles watched on high
The vultures gathering for a feast,
Till, from the quivers of the sky,
The gorgeous star-flight of the East
Flamed, and the bow of darkness bent
O'er Julian dying in his tent.

II

Was it the wind befooling me
With ancient echoes, as I lay?
Was it the antic fantasy
Whose elvish mockeries cheat the day?
Surely a hollow murmur stole
From wizard bough and ghostly bole :
' Who prates to me of arms and kings,
Here in these courts of old repose?
Thy babble is of transient things,
Broils, and the dust of foolish blows.
Thy sounding annals are at best
The witness of a world's unrest.
' Goodly the loud ostents to thee,
And pomps of time : to me more sweet
The vigils of Eternity,
And Silence patient at my feet ;
And dreams beyond the deadening range
And dull monotones of Change.
' Often an air comes idling by
With news of cities and of men.
I hear a multitudinous sigh,
And lapse into my soul again.

Julian] the Emperor Julian, who died A.D. 363 in a disastrous invasion of Persia. A fiery meteor foretold his death: he died at midnight.

Shall her great noons and sunsets be
Blurred with thine infelicity?

' Now from these veins the strength of old,
The warmth and lust of life depart ;
Full of mortality, behold

The cavern that was once my heart !
Me, with blind arm, in season due,
Let the aerial woodman hew.

' For not though mightiest mortals fall,
The starry chariot hangs delayed.
His axle is uncooled, nor shall
The thunder of His wheels be stayed.
A changeless pace His coursers keep,
And halt not at the wells of sleep.

' The South shall bless, the East shall blight,
The red rose of the Dawn shall blow ;
The million-lilied stream of Night
Wide in ethereal meadows flow ;
And Autumn mourn ; and everything
Dance to the wild pipe of the Spring.

' With oceans heedless round her feet,
And the indifferent heavens above,
Earth shall the ancient tale repeat
Of wars and tears, and death and love ;
And, wise from all the foolish Past,
Shall peradventure hail at last

' The advent of that morn divine
When nations may as forests grow,
Wherein the oak hates not the pine,
Nor beeches wish the cedars woe,
But all, in their unlikeness, blend
Confederate to one golden end—

' Beauty : the Vision whereunto,
In joy, with pantings, from afar,

Through sound and odour, form and hue,
 And mind and clay, and worm and star—
 Now touching goal, now backward huiled—
 'Toils the indomitable world.'

FRANCIS THOMPSON

1860-1907

The Hound of Heaven

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days ;
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years ;
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind ; and in the mist of tears
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
 Up vistaed hopes, I sped ;
 And shot, precipitated,
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 They beat—and a Voice beat
 More instant than the Feet—
 ‘ All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.’

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
 By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
 Trellised with intertwining charities ;
 (For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
 Yet was I sore adread
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)
 But, if one little casement parted wide,
 The gust of His approach would clash it to.
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
 Across the margent of the world I fled,

And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars ;

Fretted to dulcet jars

And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.

I said to dawn : Be sudden ; to eve : Be soon—

With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over

From this tremendous Lover !

Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see !

I tempted all His servitors, but to find

My own betrayal in their constancy,

In faith to Him their fickleness to me,

Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.

To all swift things for swiftness did I sue ;

Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.

But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,

The long savannahs of the blue :

Or whether, Thunder-driven,

They clanged His chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their
feet :—

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.

Still with unhurrying chase,

And unperturbèd pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instance,

Came on the following Feet,

And a Voice above their beat—

‘Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.’

I sought no more that after which I strayed

In face of man or maid ;

But still within the little children's eyes

Seems something, something that replies,

They at least are for me, surely for me !

I turned me to them very wistfully ;

But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair

With dawning answers there,

Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.

Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship ;

Let me greet you lip to lip,

Let me twine with you caresses,

Wantoning

With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,

Banqueting

With her in her wind-walled palace,

Underneath her azured dais,

Quaffing, as your taintless way is,

From a chalice

Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.'

So it was done :

I in their delicate fellowship was one—

Drew the bolt of Nature's secracies.

I knew all the swift importings

On the wilful face of skies ;

I knew how the clouds arise,

Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings ;

All that's born or dies

Rose and drooped with ; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—

With them joyed and was bereaven.

I was heavy with the even,

When she lit her glimmering tapers

Round the day's dead sanctities.

I laughed in the morning's eyes.

I triumphed and *I* saddened with all weather,

Heaven and *I* wept together,

And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine ;

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart

I laid my own to beat,

And share commingling heat ;

But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.

In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.

For ah ! we know not what each other says,

These things and *I* ; in sound *I* speak—

Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;

Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness :
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instance,
And past those noisèd Feet
A Voice comes yet more fleet—

'Lo ! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.'

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke !
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,

And smitten me to my knee ;
I am defenceless utterly.

I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustilhead of my young powers,

I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me ; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist ;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding ; cords of all too weak account
For earth, with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah ! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount ?

Ah ! must—

Designer infinite !—

Ah ! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn
with it ?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust ;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever

From the dank thoughts that shiver

Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

Such is ; what is to be ?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind i'
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds ;

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds

From the hid battlements of Eternity :

Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then

Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again ;

But not ere him who summoneth

I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.

Whether man's heart or life it be which yields

Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields

Be dunged with rotten death ?

Now of that long pursuit

Comes on at hand the bruit ;

That Voice is round me like a bursting sea :

‘ And is thy earth so marred,

Shattered in shard on shard ?

Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me !

Strange, piteous, futile thing !

Wherefore should any set thee love apart ?

Seeing none but I makes much of naught ' (He said),

‘ And human love needs human meriting :

How hast thou merited—

Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot ?

Alack, thou knowest not

How little worthy of any love thou art !
 Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
 Save Me, save only Me?
 All which I took from thee I did but take,
 Not for thy harms,
 But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
 All which thy child's mistake
 Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home :
 Rise, clasp My hand, and come.'

Halts by me that footfall :
 Is my gloom, after all,
 Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly ?
 ' Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
 I am He Whom thou seekest !
 Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

RUDYARD KIRKING

b. 1865

Ford o' Kabul River

KABUL town's by Kabul river—
 Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
 There I lef' my mate for ever,
 Wet an' drippin' by the ford.
 Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
 Ford o' Kabul river in the dark !
 There's the river up and brimmin', an' there's
 'arf a squadron swimmin'
 'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town's a blasted plaee—
 Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
 'Strewth I sha'n't forget 'is faee
 Wet an' drippin' by the ford !

Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
 Ford o' Kabul river in the dark !
Keep the crossing-stakes beside you, an' they will
 surely guide you
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town is sun and dust—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
I'd ha' sooner drownded fust
'Stead of 'im beside the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
 Ford o' Kabul river in the dark !
You can 'ear the 'orses threshin', you can 'ear the
 men a-splashin',
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town was ours to take—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
I'd ha' left it for 'is sake—
'Im that left me by the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
 Ford o' Kabul river in the dark !
It's none so bloomin' dry there; ain't you never
 comin' nigh there,
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark

Kabul town 'll go to hell—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
'Fore I see him 'live an' well—
'Im the best beside the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
 Ford o' Kabul river in the dark !
Gawd 'elp 'em if they blunder, for their boots 'll
 pull 'em under,
By the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Turn your 'orse from Kabul town—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
'Im an' 'arf my troop is down,
Down an' drownded by the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
 Ford o' Kabul river in the dark !
There's the river low an' fallin', but it ain't no
 use o' callin'
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

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